



UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS LIBRARY
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
STACKS

CENTRAL CIRCULATION BOOKSTACKS

The person charging this material is responsible for its renewal or its return to the library from which it was borrowed on or before the **Latest Date** stamped below. **The Minimum Fee for each Lost Book is \$50.00.**

Theft, mutilation, and underlining of books are reasons for disciplinary action and may result in dismissal from the University.

TO RENEW CALL TELEPHONE CENTER, 333-8400

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LIBRARY AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

DEC 19 1994

When renewing by phone, write new due date below previous due date.

L162







THE STONE DRAGON
AND OTHER TRAGIC ROMANCES



THE
STONE DRAGON
AND OTHER TRAGIC
ROMANCES: BY
MURRAY GILCHRIST

AUTHOR OF
'PASSION THE PLAYTHING'
'FRANGIPANNI,' ETC.



METHUEN AND CO.
18 BURY STREET, W.C.
LONDON
1894

Edinburgh : T. and A. CONSTABLE, Printers to Her Majesty

823
G 382a

Dedicated to George Alfred Garfitt

SLOCUM

APR 27 1954

9. Foundation 26 May 53 - 1000



CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE STONE DRAGON,	I
THE MANUSCRIPT OF FRANCIS SHACKERLEY,	38
MIDSUMMER MADNESS,	63
THE LOST MISTRESS,	85
WITCH IN-GRAIN,	100
THE NOBLE COURTESAN,	106
THE WRITINGS OF ALTHEA SWARTHMOOR,	117
THE RETURN,	131
THE BASILISK,	142
DAME INOWSLAD,	154
EXCERPTS FROM PLINY WITHERTON'S JOURNAL: ALSO A	
LETTER OF CRYSTALLA'S,	163
MY FRIEND,	175
ROXANA RUNS LUNATICK,	197
THE PAGEANT OF GHOSTS,	202

CERTAIN among the Stories in this volume—'Witch In-grain,' 'The Writings of Althea Swarthmoor,' 'The Return,' 'The Basilisk,' and others—have appeared in *The National Observer*, by permission of whose proprietors they are here reprinted.

THE STONE DRAGON

CHAPTER I

MY father's account of his last visit to Farnivault Castle, which I found in his journal some years after his death, enlightened me concerning the cause of his disagreement with my great-aunt Barbara. In response to an imperious summons he had travelled hurriedly from the south of France to the remote corner of Westmoreland where her estate lay; no sooner had he reached the portico than the old woman confronted him, and began to discuss a new plan for restoring his shrunken fortunes, by a marriage compact between myself and one of her great nieces, either Rachel or Mary, both of whom were children in the house. I was fifteen years old then, Rachel thirteen, and Mary ten. The ceremony was to take place at once; and I was to travel for some years before claiming my child-wife.

My father refused indignantly : scarce had his decisive words been spoken ere Lady Barbara turned away angrily.

‘Fool, is there no changing you?’ she cried.

He understood her peculiarities, and despite his acknowledgment that she was a gross and materialistic woman, who held no views beyond this world, and whose chief enjoyment was to interfere mischievously with the affairs of other folk, his kinship made him treat her with respect.

‘None,’ he replied. ‘My boy shall not be forced into bondage before he knows what love means. I would rather he begged for his bread than wronged body and soul.’

She swung round and showed a menacing face. ‘You have refused what I had set my heart on!’ Her voice softened: ‘’Tis for the love I bear you, Abston. I want to help you; remember that I am your mother’s sister. Don’t refuse me.’

‘Aunt,’ he said painfully, ‘it may not be. I cannot sin against my son.’

She came still nearer. ‘Well, so be it,’ she muttered in his ear. ‘Others will suffer for your obstinacy. I know what my project meant; but you, with your blind gropings after light, will never see. Nay; you come no farther into my house; this is no place for you!’

The door was closed violently, and my father passed along the dark avenues to the village. He

was with me in two days ; but, although I pressed him often (being curious to hear all about Farnivaux, which I had never seen), he refused to disclose either the cause or the result of his visit.

Before two years had passed, however, I found myself, by a curious trick of fortune, in the vicinity of Farnivaux Castle. I had suffered from an acute attack of brain fever, and when convalescent had been ordered by the doctor to taste the air of Marlbrok-over-Sands, a quaint watering-place at the mouth of the Lamber estuary. My father was engaged at the time in preparing for the press his volume of *Philosophical Discussions*, and, although he would willingly have accompanied me, I chose rather to take Jeffreys, a man who had been his valet in former times, but who held now the posts of confidant, secretary and checker of the domestic accounts—a faithful old servant of a type unknown to the present generation.

At first my father was averse to my visiting Marlbrok. He had suggested Nice or Mentone, fancying that the bustle of foreign life would act as a tonic ; but as he heard of the marvellous strengthening virtues which, according to Doctor Pulteney, belonged to the Lamber water, he consented, and after strictly enjoining me not to go within at least a mile of Farnivaux, travelled with me, and left me with Jeffreys at an ancient inn.

On the fourth evening of my stay I strolled with Jeffreys to a large hill whose seaward side is perfectly precipitous, but which is easily climbed landward by a winding sheep-path. When I had reached the summit I threw myself on the grass and rested for a while, gazing at the misty outline of Man; then when my dimmed eyes had cleared I turned and saw high on the side of a far-distant inland hill an enormous building, which at first sight appeared on fire, for the westering sun struck full on the great square windows. A grove of majestic trees gloomed to the left, and a park besprinkled with herds of deer sloped downward to the farthest recess of the estuary.

A shepherd was training a dog near the place where I sat : regardless of Jeffrey's deprecations, I called to him, and inquired the name of the house.

'Furnivox Castle, young sir. Lady Barbara Verelst's place,' he replied.

'What?' I cried. 'Tell me all about it. Have you ever been there? What is it like?'

Before he could answer Jeffreys interposed. 'Come, Master Ralph, it is growing chill; we shall have Doctor Pulteney here if you take cold.'

But I took no heed of him, and despite his attempted hindrance obtained all the necessary information concerning the way. An evil desire to disobey my father filled me : it seemed as if

the glamour of the house had cast a spell over me, and as I was hurried away by Jeffreys, I resolved to take advantage of him in the early morning, and to visit Lady Barbara.

I slept little that night, but lay watching the dawn creep over the sea, and listening to the plaintive chirping of birds. As the cracked bell of Marlbrook-St.-Mary's struck six I sprang from my bed, dressed hurriedly, and after a quiet laugh at the thought of what Jeffreys' consternation would be when he discovered my absence, I slipped from the house, and followed the path the shepherd had described.

It led through a long wood of small trees, matted with bracken and sedge, and crossed by many rivulets that ran down to the sea. There was much honeysuckle—so sweet that life grew absolutely perfect: I gathered a large bunch, wherein lay many bees; and chanting extempore rhymes I hurried onward.

When I reached the terrace of Farnivaux it was nearly breakfast-time. The hall door, half open, revealed a vista of ancient pictures. As I knocked there timidly, an ancient serving-man in fawn livery appeared. Something, perhaps my resemblance to my father, amazed him, and he bade me enter at once.

'I wish to see Lady Barbara Verelst,' I said.

He ushered me into a small, white-painted

room. 'Her ladyship will be with you very soon,' he replied.

Meanwhile I arranged the honeysuckle in a large china dish. As I was doing this a slight noise disturbed me, and looking up I saw a white-froaked little girl eyeing me very intently. A black Persian cat lay in her arms, rubbing its head on her shoulder.

'Cousin Mary!' I cried.

The child dropped the cat and ran forward to bring her tiny mouth to mine. But even as she kissed footsteps came, and she drew back alarmed. I took the honeysuckle and flung it all into her apron, and she, as if fearing to be seen, made for another door and disappeared.

Then Lady Barbara entered. There was nothing of the patrician in her appearance. Clad in a plain brown dress with a narrow collar of lace, she might well have passed for a housekeeper who had no liking for bright colour. Her face was round and ruddy, with a broad low forehead that was covered with an intricate network of wrinkles. Her eyes were small and sherry-coloured, and her teeth, which (as I heard afterwards) were natural, glistened like regular pieces of ivory. Altogether she struck me as a sharp bargain-driving country-woman, with a good deal of craft, and an underlying vein of sarcastic humour. As she saw me she courtesied very low.

'So you are Ralph, or Rafe, as I love best to say it,' she said. 'Well, you are very welcome here, though your father and I got across at our last meeting. But I suppose he has thought better of my proposal, and sent you now.' Here she looked at her watch, a massive gold and crystal globe that swung from her girdle. 'The girl is a long time!' she exclaimed.

Before I could open my mouth to declare the truth about my father, a rustling of silks came, and a girl swept through the doorway. She was about fifteen years old, but might well have passed for twenty. Tall and slender in figure, and with a face so perfectly, so strangely lovely, it compelled me to make a simile of a flame resolving at the lambent crest into a star. She moved towards me, and with no assumption of modesty, threw her arms around my neck and kissed me. I have no idea how she was dressed, but as I write comes a recollection of the flower called 'crown imperial,' lying on a web of red golden hair.

Lady Barbara shrieked in affected dismay. 'My dear Rachel!' she cried, 'you are forgetting yourself; Rafe is not a little boy—he's seventeen—he's a man!'

Rachel Verelst turned to her, uplifting luminous eyes: 'O aunt,' she said, with a sigh of relief, 'it is most delicious to see a man. I am

Miranda—he Ferdinand. Cousin (minglingly), you're the first man I've seen for two years, except of course the servants, and they don't count with such people as your lowly handmaid.'

Something about her—perhaps the fact that her manner was so opposed to that with which I had endowed my ideal woman—fascinated me at once. Never before had I seen such radiant beauty: never before had I known a woman lay herself out so coquettishly to attract attention. She was unlike anything I had ever dreamed of, and even as I stood I felt myself become enthralled. There was such admiration, too, in her glance—admiration of the most flattering kind. All suddenly I sprang high in self-esteem.

'A handsome couple,' the old woman said pointedly. 'One fair as day: the other, as Shakespeare says somewhere, black as night. Yes, day and night! Now pray let me see you walk together to the breakfast-room. I will waive etiquette for once, and you shall take precedence. Ah, yes, sir, your arm was given gracefully: I am quite satisfied with your manner. You are a Verelst, though your name is Eyre.'

With many comments upon the picture we made, she followed us to a small parlour hung with red velvet, embossed with earl's coronets in gilt. A light meal was spread. The aroma of

coffee filled the air, and after the footman had brought in the hot dishes, a gust of fresher sweetness came as Mary, shyly bedecked with honeysuckle, entered and sat at my side. Lady Barbara took no heed of her appearance, so bent was she on her own plans.

'So your father has really conquered his prejudices,' she remarked. 'I knew all the time that they meant nothing (poor Alston, he was always feather-brained!), and I did not believe that he would have held out so long. Well, forgive and forget. It does my heart good to see you and Rachel at table together; I am almost inclined to sing *Nunc Dimittis* at once!'

Something in the exultancy of her voice suppressed my avowed that, overpowered by curiosity and attraction, I had come clandestinely. It was not from kindness that my tongue refused its office, but rather of a dread of how she might act.

'Did he send any message, any writings?' she inquired sharply.

I shook my head.

'Ah, the rogue!' she said. 'He's proud of you; he knows that your presence is enough to explain all. Ay, and a very good recommendation to my favour! Alston had ever a little of the diplomatist. Again let me assure you that nobody could be more welcome.'

So the meal passed. Often Rachel turned to

me with proudly sweeping eyes, and brought her face so near mine that I could see my reflection in each apple. For one so young her wit was brilliant and sharp-edged, but the vivid outlines of her colouring prevented me from seeing anything unmaidenly in her demeanour. There was depth mingled with unstableness in her character; and although against my will I was allured, I could not help feeling a sort of oppression, as if the air were becoming too heavily perfumed. Two centuries ago she might have shone as a king's mistress. When I looked at her sister, timid, frail, and shrinking, it was as if a draught of cool air rippled across my temples.

Once the child essayed to speak. 'Cousin Rafe,' she said softly, 'will you tell me after breakfast what the world is like. I don't mean the country or the little market towns, but those places that one reads about. Is Venice like Mrs. Radcliffe paints it in the *Mysteries of Udolpho*?'

Lady Barbara began to laugh rather coarsely. 'What is the girl raving about?' she said, turning contemptuously to Rachel. 'Does she think that at my age I've nothing better to do than to listen to puerile descriptions. My dear Rafe, do not trouble with her. Rachel, I wonder you permit his attention to be distracted.'

Great tears rolled down Mary's cheeks. I was

suggested. 'I like to hear her talk,' I said chivalrously.

At this my great-aunt laughed again, but Rachel, with wonderful tact rose and embraced her sister. If she had not done so I believe that I should have hated her. Even Lady Barbara was pleased.

'You are a good girl, Rachel,' she said, patting her shoulder. 'Now, Mary, you must forgive my querulousness.'

She took Rachel's hand and drew her from the table. As she reached the door she paused.

'Rafe,' she said, 'can you amuse yourself till noon? Rachel writes my letters and manages everything for me, so I must take her away. Mary, make your cousin's stay here as pleasant as you can: show him all over the house and gardens—or anywhere so long as he's entertained. If you care to ride order the ponies.'

But Mary, as soon as we were alone, led me to the open window. A flight of stairs descended from here to an old garden where busts and urns surmounted columns of fluted marble. A spring, prettily over many-hued stones, crossed the middle of this and deepened into shallow pools that were edged with irises and flowering rushes.

'Let us sit beside the dragon at the well-head,' she said; 'it is my favourite dreaming-place, and I will ask you all I want to know. I am not

tiresome to you, Cousin Rafe ?' she added, with downcast eyes.

Our spirits rose. Ere long I was chasing her up and down the maze, quite forgetful of the gravity of seventeen, and attempting at each corner to grasp her flying skirts, but ever failing intentionally, out of compliment to her lightness of foot. Her paleness had quite disappeared, and as she laughed at me through the legs of the yew periwinks, she looked like a young nymph. She began to sing hurriedly, in a silvery voice, in imitation of some gaffer :—

'When first I went a-waggonin', a-waggonin' did go,
I filled my peircants' hearts full of sorrs', grief, an'
we;

And many are the hardships that I ha' since gone thro'.
So sing we, my lads, sing we. Drive on, my lads,
Yo-ho!

For ye canna drive a waggon when the horses
wanna go.'

Every word came clear and distinct. Scarcely, however, had she begun the second verse than the sound of an approaching vehicle silenced her. We looked down the avenue, and beheld a trap drawn by a bony white horse.

It drew up near us. A familiar voice accosted me : 'Master Ralph.'

To my surprise it was old Jeffreys, very haggard, and with eyes more sad than reproachful.

'O Master Ralph,' he said, 'come back at once, for God's sake! There's just time enough to catch the boat, if you don't linger a moment. Word came this morning that my poor master was dying.'

His voice broke into sobs. Turning hastily to the child who stood aghast at my side, I gave her one quick kiss, and then sprang up to the boat, forgetful of all save the great catastrophe.

CHAPTER II

When I reached home it was to find my father dead. Had I arrived an hour sooner I should have had the gratification of holding his hand in mine during the parting moments, and have heard his last words. But my act of disobedience had prevented this, and by my secret visit to Furieux I had lost what would have been one of the dearest recollections of my life. He had died thinking of me, and as the last struggle began had stammered out that I was to yield myself entirely to the written instructions contained in the secret drawer of his writing-desk, and intended for my eyes alone.

Therein I found myself directed to spend the years intervening before my coming of age at a tiny estate in northern Italy. He had purchased

it several months before his death, and having such use for it in view, had furnished the house comfortably and revived the faded glories of the library. Bound by a solemn command I was to live retired from the world, and not to present myself at Fumivaux whilst Lady Barbara Vercht lived.

The manuscript concluded mystically: 'I have known that in your youth she will cross your path; an unscrupulous woman who cares for nought so long as her heart's desire is fulfilled. The stars declare it. Perhaps, even as I write, she may be weaving the fatal web that is to destroy life and happiness. But the line of Fate runs on straightway. I cannot tell (for the evil destiny may overpower you) what to advise, but let justice and love ever sway you, and remember that earth's joy is nought in comparison with that which follows. Beware, Ralph, of her I write of, wherever she be.'

Overpowered with grief, my first impulse was a petulant and unreasonable fury against those with whom I had passed that delicious summer morning. So angry was I with the cause of my disobedience that I did not even write to Lady Barbara, and after my father's funeral I started at once for the home he had chosen.

Here I passed seven years of irresolute work. The management of the estate was entirely in my

own hands, and I worked in a desultory fashion amongst my people, earning their affection, and being as happy as any man who has no aim in life. I had always my ideals and my recollections to think of, and I never felt a desire for stranger interests.

At last came a time when all this ceased, and I became terribly depressed. Who can trust presentiments? I have had so many—so many true and so many false, that I have alternately believed and disbelieved in the supernatural powers in which foolish people place such absolute trust. We spend many hours in mourning over catastrophes that never occur, whilst at the time that the greatest possible disasters are affecting our fortunes, we are plunged into the lightest ecstasy.

Yet I must confess that, when I received word from the Vercht's lawyer that on the opening of my great-aunt's will he had discovered a new codicil by which I was compelled to marry either Rachel or Mary, or to suffer the estates to pass entirely from our branch of the family, a long vista of ills opened before me, and I complained bitterly, because of the craftiness and self-will of the old woman, who would not believe that ought but worldly interest was necessary for marriage.

At first I determined not to go, but as the knowledge came that, unless I did so my cousins would be plunged into poverty, I gave instruc-

tions for my trunk to be packed, and left everything in the hands of a steward. It was with considerable trepidation that I pondered over our meeting; and as I looked farewell on the gardens of my house, on the vineyards and the river, I execrated the memory of the old make-plot.

In four days I was on the platform at Carlhys station, watching with a sort of amazement the train that had brought me disappearing at the curve, and wondering whether the letter I had written from Dover had forewarned the ladies, when a withered groom advanced and touched his hat in antiquated style.

'Be ye Mr. Rafe?' he said. 'Why, God bless me, what am I sayin'—as if I couldn't tell him from his likeness to Mr. Alston!'

'Yes,' I responded laughingly. 'I am Rafe Eyre. You are from Furnivaux Castle?' He wore the old fawn livery with pelicans wrought on the buttons, and a high white crape stock was tied around his neck. 'You are surely not Stephen, whom my father spoke of so often?'

'That I be!' he cried.

I remembered him perfectly now, from my father's description. In my boyhood, I had been told that he was at least ninety; yet he was still straight as a staff.

'Miss Rachel's waiting outside in the carriage, sir,' he said. 'Train's nigh upon an hour late!'

With this gentle hint that his mistress might be growing impatient, he seized my luggage and led me to the gate, where stood a large green chariot.

A woman's voice accosted me. 'I bid you welcome, cousin.' And before I could speak I felt my hand taken and held. The sunlight was gleaming so fiercely, that I could scarcely distinguish the features that smiled beneath the crown of red-golden hair; but when I did so it was with a start of astonishment, for Rachel Verelst's beauty had become transcendent.

She leaned back against the soft olive velvet cushions, and after insisting on my sitting at her side, she gave the order, and we were driven through the stretches of woodland and moor, and over the miles of park road that lead to Furnivanz. Half bewildered I continually turned to look at my companion. Strange to say she did not wear mourning, but a gown of yellow tulle, worked in high relief with golden flowers, and the outline of her splendidly proportioned figure was visible through the gauzy folds.

Whether it was that my arrival had excited her, or that it was her ordinary motion, I could not tell, but her heart was beating wildly beneath its coverings, and floods of a rich colour sped to and from her cheeks.

Her bizarre conversation related much to the

object of my visit. The peculiarity of the circumstances she took little heed of, and having at the first moment leaped into the familiarity of an old friend, she tacitly refused to vacate the position.

'How delightful it is,' she remarked as we passed through the Headless Cross wood, 'to meet a man who knows something of the outer world! O the stupidity of our country gentlemen, whose noblest aspiration is to dine well; whose noblest possibility is to hide the mark of the ploughman and the leut! How definitely you refresh me, Rafe! Your presence here has already done me a world of good. If you only knew how stagnant—how wearisome life is! Bah! but you don't sympathise!'

This last observation was made because I had not replied, but to tell the truth I did not wish my voice to break the musical echo hers had left in my ears. I expressed a hope that she would not regard me as laconic, but rather as overwhelmed by the gladness of reunion.

Whilst I spoke the turrets of Fumivaux, just touched by the purple rays of the setting sun, gleamed above a cluster of guarded elms. The mists from the sloping woods had ascended to the parapet of the roof and given it the aspect of a terrace in the clouds. A gaily-coloured flag fluttered in the Giant's Tower, and I could

distinctly see the crest wrought in flagrant contradiction to the laws of blazonry.

'Twas I who did it,' Rachel said, 'in your honour. Mary wanted to embroider the pelican, but it was all my own idea, and I would not let her. However, she prevailed on me concerning the motto—see—you can just catch a glimpse of her *Nourrit par son sang*, in azure letters.'

The carriage stopped in front of the portico, and Stephen opened the door. My cousin laid her hand on my arm, and we entered the great hall together. As I paused to look up at the domed roof, with its pargeting of wyverns and cockleshells, a feeling of chilliness made me shiver.

'My dear Rafe,' Rachel said, 'the change of climate tries you. Had I imagined that the place would be so cold I would have ordered a fire to be lighted. This is the way to the dining-room. I wonder where my sister is;—ah, you are there, Mary.'

One dressed in the plainest of white muslin stood in an open doorway. She shrunk visibly at the sight of my outstretched hand, and it was only by an effort that she placed her own in it; to lie there for too brief a space. Her figure was slight and insignificant, and she had not a feature worthy of comparison with her brilliant sister's. Rachel had taken away all the awkwardness of

my involuntary visit; Mary had forced it back again, and I mentally accused her of inhospitality.

Rachel, seeing that I was hurt, turned with the intention of diverting my thoughts.

'Pray do not change your clothes this evening,' she said. 'We are very unconventional here, and it is nearly dinner-time. I will show you the state bedroom—it is at your disposal.'

So saying she led me to an immense upper chamber, with a gilt bedstead hung with watchet blue. Grotesque lacquered cabinets lined the walls, and in each corner stood a dark-green monster from Nan-kin. Here I made a few hasty alterations in my toilet, and after slipping a spray of honeysuckle from a bowl on the dressing-table into my button-hole I hurried down to the drawing-room. Mary sat within; her knees covered by a long piece of lawn which she was embroidering. It fell to the floor and she turned very pale as I entered.

'Cousin Mary,' I said reproachfully, 'why do you treat me so coldly? Have I offended you?'

Her eyes were slowly lifted to mine, and I beheld in them, despite her timidity, a look of the keenest pleasure. She held out her hand tentatively, and seemed relieved when I grasped it.

'I am sorry that you should have misunderstood me,' she murmured. 'The anticipation of

this meeting has been so painful. I am not as strong as Rachel, and anything disconcerts me.'

Rachel's entrance prevented any further remarks. She had taken advantage of the short time to doff her yellow gown for one of pale green gauze, of the same hue as the sea where the sunlight falls over shallows. A pair of fancifully worked gloves were fastened to her girdle: they were made of a claret-coloured, semi-transparent skin. With a laughing reminder of the ceremony we had used as boy and girl at our first meeting, she accompanied me to the table, where the meal passed in delicious interchange of thought, during which, although Mary neither spoke nor seemed to listen I could well understand that she was appreciative.

When I returned to the drawing-room Rachel's look was mischievous: Mary had evidently been reproving her.

'You shall judge me, Hafe,' she cried, holding up her hands so that I might see what she had done. The gloves she had worn at her belt covered them now. They were awkwardly made, and on the back of each was worked a silk picture of a dagger and a vial.

'They are tragic accompaniments,' she said. 'Mary has been scolding me for wearing them—she declares that they will bring me ill luck. Do you believe in such nonsense?'

She did not wait for my reply, but continued:

'They were made of the skin of a murderess gibbeted in these parts a hundred and twenty years ago. Old Barnard Verebt insisted on having a piece: he wanted to cover a book with it, but his wife, whom tradition reports as a real she-devil, insisted on having those gloves instead. Between ourselves, the result was that she poisoned her lord, but as he was very old, nobody was much the worse.'

And mirthfully arching her mouth, she passed the gloves into my hand. A strong repugnance to touch them made me immediately drop them on a side table. Rachel's originality carried her into strange humours. I was not sorry when the lamps were brought. They were of curious Venetian make, with round shades of silver lattice work filled in with cubes of gold-coloured glass. Their soft and pleasant light enhanced Rachel's personal charm.

She went to the piano soon, and calling me to her side, began to play. Never had I heard such wild and fantastical music as the first three melodies. They were Russian; savage, rough airs, which fretted me to unhealthy excess of inquietude. After the third, by which the soul is wrought to such a pitch that it is hard to refrain from shrieking, she began a plaintive air with a grotesque rhythm.

'This is the tune the gnomes dance to on the

hillside,' she said. 'Here they emphasise the step; now they float round and round in rings; now the king is performing alone and they are all watching. My favourite is that one with the white slashed doublet and crooked face, with a moustache so long that it pricks the others. Ah, well! (with hands brought down clashingly) they must all creep through the bronze door. *So!*' Then, playing another unfamiliar melody, she began to sing Shelley's 'Love's Philosophy.' I scarcely dare attempt to describe her voice. Poets have dreamed of its likes (heard them I may swear never); it was almost unearthly in its pathos, and tears were streaming from my eyes ere the first verse was ended. How she could sing so purely I cannot tell, but it seemed as if to the accompaniment of music all the dross were purged from her spiritual nature, and an innocence left, unsullied as that of our first mother ere she sinned.

As the song went on a fuller harmony sustained her, and looking around, I saw that Mary's hands swept delicately over the strings of a harp that stood in shadow. I leaned back, delivered to perfect delight, but just as my head pressed the cushion a sob came from Rachel's lips, and rising hastily, she pressed her hands over her face and hurried from the room.

Mary followed her, but returned almost immediately. 'Cousin Rafe,' she said nervously,

'forget that Rachel has broken down—her singing often overpowers her—she feels everything too acutely. She begs you to pardon her absence for the rest of the evening. Recent events—my aunt's illness and sudden death amongst them—have unnerved her; you must remember what great store they set on each other.'

The revulsion was very distressing. I had begun to regard Rachel as a woman of iron will, endowed with an intellect nothing could quail. This sign of weakness, coming so unexpectedly, surprised and pained me. Had I been more closely connected with her, I would have sought her chamber and drawn her head to my breast.

As I sat, the moon began to rise over the further hills. The rays slanted into the Italian garden, where, seven years before, Mary and I had played like young children. She had returned to her harp and was drawing forth soft chords. The night, however, became so beautiful that I felt I must breathe the outer air.

'Let us walk together,' I said. 'Show me the dragon and the maze where we ran, and the lilies and flowing rushes. The heat of the room oppresses me.'

She led me silently down the broad stone stairs. The dragon was unchanged.

'We will sit here,' she said; 'and you can tell me everything that has happened in the last few

years. I have nothing to give in return, for my life has been placid from the very beginning, and the only great excitement I ever had was when you visited Farnivaux before. Rachel says that I have a small soul; it must be so, for the quiet content of this place suits me well. I suppose that I am one of those weeds that root themselves firmly anywhere. Each thing about here I love as if it were a part of me. Now, forgive me for my tediousness, and tell me everything !'

Thus hidden, I began the story of how I had spent the intervening time. There was little worth telling. It was a brief and simple record of dormant faculties and aspirations, when my highest desire had been for undisturbed sleep. Mary listened in silence, and when I had finished, looked up.

'But the awakening has come now,' she said very gently. 'A new future is thrust upon you :—your life will no longer be as it was.'

Somehow as she spoke my head moved nearer hers, and before she could draw back my lips had pressed her cheek. She rose, gasping, then turning on me a look of surprise and wonder, she hurried away. Perhaps some reminiscence of our former racing came to her, for I heard her laugh, light and long and silvery, as her gown glimmered through the yews.

When I retired to my room, it was not to

sleep. A conflict was raging in heart and brain. Rachel was undeniably the more beautiful: indeed she was by far the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, and her wit and power of fascination were incomparably superior to Mary's. She evidently believed that I must choose her, and so I had fully intended to do until a tone in Mary's voice and a quick responsive beating of my own heart told me that it could not be. Mary had never imagined that I should take her in preference, but I knew now that whatever love lay in my nature must be placed in her keeping. I had discovered that I wanted no mental stronghold to surround me, but a wife, tender, loving, and dependent.

Uncertain whether a declaration would or not be premature, I decided to leave the castle early next morning, and to reflect for at least a month on my decision. Rachel had acquired a strong influence over me, and I dared not venture to free myself from her bonds without tightening my armour. So, rising almost before daybreak, I set out in secret, from the village inn despatching a short note:—

'My dear Rachel,—Do not attempt to fathom the motive which compels me to leave Furnivaux. Impute it, if you will, to flightiness. I was always fond of doing strange things. I shall return in a month—a month to-day.—RALPH EYRE.'

My meditating place was Northern Hall, a small manor-house situated about two hundred miles away. I had inherited it from my mother. It stands in a little park, outside an antiquated market town. I had installed Jeffreys, my father's old friend, and he was living out the remainder of his years in ease and solitude.

He was standing in the walled rose-garden when I reached the place. Half his time since my father's death had been spent with me in Italy; but the climate had proved unsuited to him, and he had been compelled to return to England. The affection he greeted me with was very touching. Although I had always been very tiresome, I have no doubt that he loved me deeply.

A suite of rooms had been kept in readiness for me, and I was soon made comfortable therein. I had much writing to do, and for some days worked hard, so that I might drive away the thought of my dilemma. But after awhile, when I was idle again, the remembrance of Mary's timid loveliness haunted me from morning to night, and I began to long for the time of my return.

The momentous day came at last. Rachel Verelet, like another Fiammetta, clad in a gown of dull dark green, with scarlet lilies at the neck, met me on the terrace. There was a slightly puzzled look in her eyes, when I did not give her the warm greeting she evidently expected; but

she slipped her arm into mine with as much graceful ease as if she were already my wife.

There was no sign of Mary, and when I inquired for her Rachel replied evasively. Not until I went to the drawing-rooms after dinner did I see her. She was alone, sitting near a window, with a book in her hands.

She gave a sudden start when she saw me. 'O Rafe,' she cried, 'when did you come? I did not know you were here: Rachel would not tell me anything about you, either where you were or why you went, and I have only just come in from riding to watch the sunset.'

Before she had done speaking I had clasped her in my arms and was showering kisses on her lips.

'Mary,' I whispered, 'I have come back for you!'

She began to extricate herself, but before I had released her the door opened, and Rachel herself entered.

CHAPTER III

Sam gave but little sign that she had seen the entrance. The bunch of white roses she held in her right hand were raised slowly, as if she wished to inhale their perfume, and beneath their shade her lips were convulsed for just one moment.

Then with even more than the old grace she came near. Her skirt caught the gilded legs of a chair and drew it for a short distance, but she took no heed. She began to smile winningly.

'Has Mary told you of the naughty trick I played?' she said. 'I wanted to keep all the gratification to myself: it was so great a pleasure to know something of you that nobody else knew. Of course I was selfish! Now, my cousin, as you gave her a guerdon for waiting so patiently, do not forget that I also waited. Not with patience, for I have chafed terribly—but still, every awakening has been fraught with the knowledge that a day nearer our meeting had come.'

And she held up her mouth, sweet and ruddy as the lilies on her breast. I kissed her. Seeing that I made no motion to encircle her with my arms as I had done to Mary, she clasped her hands at the back of my neck, and again brought her lips to mine.

'There is nothing wrong in my kissing you?' she murmured inquiringly. 'When women kiss it is mere passionless duty and affection; but when I kiss you . . . O Rafe, Rafe, Rafe! I cannot say it!'

I saw Mary's reflection in a mirror. She was standing wan and wretched-looking by the window. When she knew that I was watching her she moved quietly from the room. Rachel laughed nervously as the door closed.

'It is well to be alone, Rafe! I never thought that I should feel the presence of a third person such a restraint, but so it is! I cannot breathe freely with you unless I have you entirely to myself. Now, I wish to know what you have been doing away from me, or rather (for, of course, I do know all about it), I am dying to hear the words you have to say to me.'

Not divining her meaning, I hesitated. 'I do not understand you,' I said.

She laughed again, this time very sadly. Somehow I felt that she was murdering her scruples. She raised her fan and struck me lightly on the shoulder.

'Dear Rafe,' she said, 'I know well that you are overcome with a kind of reluctance to declare yourself. Why then should we temporise? You have not known me for so short a time as not to see that—that—I love you with my whole heart and soul.'

The last words came in a hoarse undertone. Then with her flushed face downcast she left me, turning once at the door, to see if I followed. But, being almost petrified with amazement, I did not move. I had never thought sufficiently highly of myself as to believe that Rachel would really love me. I knew that she might marry me to retain the estates, but not for one instant had I imagined that I could stir her passion.

The knowledge filled me with dread. Although she charmed, nay, almost magnetised me, my pulse beat none the quicker because of her presence, and I felt blinded with excess of light. A desire came for the soothing Mary's voice alone could give, and I too left the room.

Old Stephen, stiff as the mailed figures in the hall, was pacing outside the door. His eighty years of service had given him the freedom of the house. He divined my intention. 'Miss Mary is in the garden,' he said.

I went to the Stone Dragon, convinced that I should find her there. I was not deceived: she was sitting on the sward beside the monster; her head resting on his scaly back. At my approach her face lighted up, and she rose to meet me.

'Forgive me for being so weak,' she murmured coyly. 'I could not bear to see you kissing Rachel. I am foolishly jealous and—it followed so quickly after——'

'Dear Mary,' I said, 'let us forget it all. To-night I would leave the precincts of the house. Let us walk together to the moor. There is a British camp somewhere near: it will be just the place for a solemn vowing. Show me the way!'

She led me through the intricate maze to a door in a moss-covered wall, which opened on a barren path. This crossed a mile of park, and then reached a broad and hilly stretch of moorland.

Here the track was sunken between gravelly banks. At some distance rose a mound, on whose top stood three cromlechs.

When we stood against the largest, I took her right hand.

'I, Ralph Eyre, swear solemnly that all my life shall be devoted to your happiness.'

Mary's voice, soft and trembling, followed. 'I, Mary Vereist, swear solemnly that all my life shall be devoted——'

A harsh cry interrupted her. Turning sharply we saw Rachel herself, covered with a long grey cloak, whose hood had fallen back. How she had followed so silently I never knew: it may have been that she had unwittingly chosen this as a night walk, but whether or no, her presence here was the work of some evil genius. She was haggard, and as the moonlight fell on her distorted face I saw that her eyes had contracted so much as to be almost invisible. One hand was tearing the flowers from her throat, the other moved automatically in front.

'Rafe!' she muttered, 'Rafe!'

Mary came closer, and passed her arm around my wrist. She was nearly fainting, and required all my strength to support her, but I was impotent as a new-born child, and could only grasp her elbow with nervous fingers.

'Is this the end?' Rachel asked. Her voice

was dull and monotonous. 'Answer me quickly—don't you know what a woman's heart is? Is this the end of all I have prayed for—this refusal of my passion?'

I strove to speak: my teeth chattered.

'I am not an heroic woman, noble enough to wear the willow in peace, and to pass my prime in the doing of good deeds. God forgive me; my nature is small—so small that you have consumed its virtue! If only my love would change to hatred I could endure it better.'

With this she moved rapidly away. Some minutes passed in silence.

'Let us go in at once,' Mary said. 'I am afraid.'

We returned to the castle. As we reached the postern door Rachel's grey figure rose before us again. Her attitude was threatening now, and her voice clear and loud. She thrust out both hands to show that she had donned the skin gloves.

'Am I attired for tragedy?' she cried, 'or is it because of the devilry in my soul that I desire evil things about me? See, they fit better now—my fingers are swollen—with bitterness if you like!'

Nearer she came. Mary flung her arms around me, and despite my endeavours and entreaties that she should move, leaned closely on my breast.

'She shall kill me first,' she said quietly. 'My body is yours.'

Rachel's eyes were flaming sullenly. 'I am denied,' she said. 'Had you died before this moment I should have been a maid all my life; had you vowed celibacy, I would have loved you still, though the world lay between us. As it is——'

With one powerful effort I forced Mary aside and stood facing Rachel. 'How can I control my affection?' I cried. 'I had not the creating of it.'

She shook her head ominously. 'Since you are lost to me as the completion of myself,' she murmured, 'let us remain unwed, and choose poverty for the future. Who knows but we may rise to greater riches and state? I will be content with little—a pressure of the hand, nay to breathe the same air will be enough for me. Only give me your constancy! It is the thought that you will belong to another that hurts so cruelly now!'

Strung to the highest tension, I replied, '*It cannot be.*'

Rachel's hand toyed at her breast for an instant, then making a sudden upward movement, curved in the air and came glittering towards my heart.

A moan of horror was the only sound. Afterwards something bore down at my feet, and a

fountain of hot blood gushed over the grass. Mary had sprung before me and saved my life. Forgetful of all else, I knelt, and lifting her in my arms, carried her to the house. Rachel was no longer in sight. As soon as the blow had fallen she fled.

The bells rang from daybreak. It was a hot autumn morning, and the after-math of honey-suckle was very rich. I had gathered great clusters for my bride, and was in my lightest humour. That morning I was to wed her whom I had watched so long winning her way back to health.

Together we walked to the damp old church: she in her simplest gown, I in my ordinary clothes. Mary had ever a fond belief that her sister would return to forgive her for her guiltless sin; and she would not agree to our leaving Furnivault for even one day.

So we were married. No wedding party accompanied us: the clerk gave Mary away, and although money had been dispersed amongst the villagers, there was no merry-making. A few girls cast roses on the path,—that was all.

Home we went. Old Stephen was standing at the door. A sullen resentment was on his face: he looked as if he hated us.

'She's come back,' he said in a broken voice. 'Poor lass! poor lass!'

Mary ran forward, her face glowing with joy. She had never harboured an ill-feeling against her sister.

'Where is she?' she asked. 'Did you tell her, Stephen?'

'No, Miss Mary, I didn't. She knew about it, though, I'll be bound! Perhaps Mr. Eyre had best go alone to find her!'

But my true love clasped my arm. 'Let me come too,' she said. 'Stephen, tell us where she is.'

'She's sought you at th' old stone dragon, where ye were always a-sitting in th' old time. Ye'll find her there right enow.'

The man burst out sobbing as we hurried down the staircase. To me there came a terrible fear, but Mary had a bride's blitheness.

We reached the Italian garden. A travel-stained form lay beside the dragon. The face was buried in the thick wild thyme, but a bright web of red-golden hair was spread over the lichened stone.


Mary knelt and strove to turn her. 'My darling,' she said. 'How much I have missed you. It was tender of you to come to-day. Though I love Rafe so, you were always most dear and wonderful to me!'

After much effort she raised Rachel's head to her lap. The beautiful features had sharpened strangely and the skin was ashen grey.

'O my God! O Rafe!' my wife shrieked.
'She is cold; *she is dead!*'

THE MANUSCRIPT OF FRANCIS SHACKERLEY

*(Being a True Account of the Most Noble Lady, the
Lady Millicent Campion.)*

INCE that news has come this day of Sir Humphreville Campion—a death strangely caused by the bursting of an alembic—there is naught to hinder me from taking up my drowsy pen and writing a true history of certain matters that caused no small wonder in their day. True it is that I would liefer work in my garden amongst the simples and flowers, for since the last affairs to be narrated in my history, all thought has been painful to me, and the world a place rather to endure than to dwell in. There is a quiet joy in the breeding of small cattle and the growth of crops; but to one who has tasted of life's sweetness such pleasure is wondrously piteable.

We met first in 1611. My father's coach, as

we were travelling to Shoreness Manor, where dwelt my aunt Bargrave, broke down outside the village of Stratton—the left sling being over-chafed. How it came about I know not, but in the scuffle, when my folks were hastening back to the inn, I stole unnoticed across the road to a mossy wall, and, filled with ardent mischief, leaped over and ran panting along the sward. Monstrous elms, with contorted boles, stood about: it was springtide and the leaves were freshly green; in the branches overhead squirrels played and squeaked.

Soon I heard two sounds, cuckoo and a child mocking cuckoo: turning abruptly past a high jetto, as thin in the lower part as a needle, but towards the top breaking into mist which the sun made orange and purple and blue, I reached a tennis-court, where a girl danced, an odd pretty creature, with a pale face and ringlets so deeply hued that they might have been washed in blood. She was all alone, tripping round and round in a ring, first on one foot, then on the other, and singing to herself in baby language. The cuckoo marked time: at every note little mistress drew herself upright, clasped her hands, and cried *cuckoo*, then continued her dance. I stood by in silence, till, as she passed for the third time, she lifted her eyes, showing how they were hazel and big.

‘Ah,’ she said in a proud fashion, ‘’tis not

Humphreville! Day after day have I thought to see him. They said last summer he had flown away with the cuckoo, and I know that with the cuckoo he must return. It is lonely here with no playmates. Who are you?’

‘Frank Shackerley. My father’s coach broke down, and I ran away.’

She held out a tapering brown hand, on whose marriage finger gleamed a golden ring. ‘And I am the most noble lady, the Lady Millicent Campion, wife to Sir Humphreville Campion.’

‘You tease me,’ I said vexedly. ‘You are not nearly as old as I, so you cannot be a wife.’

The Lady Millicent came nearer, tears gathering in her eyes; she put her arm around my neck. ‘Dear heart,’ she murmured, ‘’tis true. I know not how it came, but in the summer Humphreville stayed here with his parents, and I was wedded to him. At night when I was put to bed they brought him to kiss me, and when I awoke in the morning he had gone with the cuckoo. Why does not he stay with me and keep house like other husbands?’

At this moment an elderly woman came through the yew archway: she leaped almost off her feet with surprise. ‘Bless us!’ she cried, ‘an elvling!’ And she caught little Millicent in her arms; but the child laughed and patted her cheeks.

‘Nurse Granmodé,’ she said, ‘Master Shackerley

hath stole away from his friends to visit me. Put me down at once, for I must speak with him. At once, I say! Dear nurse, do!’

The woman obeyed, and Millicent came again to my side. ‘Now let us kiss, for you must go back to your people,’ she whispered. ‘Tis very good to meet you. I shall often think of you when you are gone.’

She brought her smooth lips to mine, and kissed with evident delight. The nurse separated us. ‘Madam, your mother will be uneasy if we do not return now,’ she said. ‘The bell has rung: we must go at once.’

Her charge took up the seams of her green skirt, and made a courtesy, then with a strange grace walked quietly away. In some manner she made me feel that I was utterly unpolished in comparison: her gait—her way of speaking—might have been copied in courts.

When she had passed out of sight I hurried back to the coach, where I found the men taking out the valuables. My parents and sisters had gone back to Stratton, imagining that I had preceded them; so I hastened along the road and soon reached the ‘Bull and Butcher,’ which we had left only an hour before.

In the inn-yard a set of mountebanks was playing ‘The Merriments of the Men of Gotham’; but though I loved these shows, I did not pause till I

entered the presence of my mother, who was in high unrest at my absence. My father stood conversing with the innkeeper, a comely, well-proportioned dame, who put me in mind of the portrait of Anne Bullen at Amnest. 'Twas more than strange—'twas wicked,' I heard him say, 'the lass to have no choice!'

Mistress Nappy-ale replied, 'A sweet child if ever there was any!' My mother's curiosity conquered. I was sitting on her knee—all fears were allayed. 'Pray, husband, what is the purport of your long conversation?' He took her hand lightly. 'A pitiful story, indeed!' he said. 'Mistress here is telling me of Lord Dorel's mad freak about his daughter's marriage. Will you not repeat it to my wife? Dorel's Park was where the sling broke.'

Our hostess then began an account of how the Earl of Dorel, who had lost much of his fortune at the court of Elizabeth, had slightly retrieved his position by selling his child as wife to Humphreville Campion, a lad of thirteen: his father, Sir Withers Campion, being desirous for him to interwed with one of the purest stock in England. The Earl was old and prodigate; he desired to shine amongst the gallants of Scottish James. Lady Millicent was seven years old at the time: her mother, a simple creature, so brow-beaten that she dared not oppose any wish of her

lord. After the ceremony, which was performed by the Bishop of Exeter, Sir Withers took Humphreville away to dwell at Campion Court until both parties attained ripe years. The act had made Lord Dorel very unpopular in the country, and since that day, now eight months ago, he had not once appeared at Dorel's Park.

This story made a deep impression on me. I remember that I was silent about my meeting with the baby-wife, not even telling the truth to my mother. When the coach was repaired and we went on to Aunt Bargrave's, my quietness was construed by my sisters into a sense of shame because of my escapade. For some weeks I was dull and heavy; I desired a companionship that was not attainable, and was regarded for a time as wasting. Nature, however, took mistress-ship, and before midsummer the subtle influence of Millicent seemed to have worn away.

Then intervened seventeen years, which, since they have little or naught to do with the Lady Millicent, I may pass over without excess of detail. I was educated at Salisbury Grammar School, and in 1617 became gentleman commoner at Christchurch, where, in 1622, I took the degree of Master of Arts. My father dying about this time, left me the estate of Annet. My three sisters were married, one to a French noble, the others to men of position in our own county. Unaccustomed

to the use of money, I set to squandering my fortune, and, being drawn into the vices of the court, kept wenches and horses both for myself and my less endowed friends. Time came when I discovered that half my money was dissipated : all my land mortgaged. I had some talent for writing : at Oxford I had composed many satires ; so, with some wild view of retrieval, I wrote a play, which was often acted with great applause by the High and Mighty Prince Charles's servants, at the private house in Salisbury Court. Three other comedies followed ; then a tragedy, then an epic of *Mars and Venus*, then *The Mother*, a tragi-comedy, on the presentation of which, before the king and queen, at the 'Red Bull' in Drury Lane, I first met Humphreville, now Sir Humphreville Camplan.

His repute had often reached me, for he was accounted one of the maddest men in England. In his youth he had spent some years on the continent, and had there imbibed a love of occult things. 'Twas even said that he discovered the philosopher's stone. Darcy, my schoolfellow, who was murdered in Italy on his first tour, wrote once from Paris, where he had visited Sir Humphreville, who showed him a richly-coloured water, which he declared would turn any metal into gold. Then, doubtless by some sleight of hand, he performed an experiment whereby two ounces

of the great metal were found in a crucible where lead had been before. Darcy had begged for a piece, but had been denied on the plea that all was not perfected.

Seeing that I had often wondered about him, it will amaze none to find that I examined him from top to toe. He was very tall—of at least six feet; his frame was thin; his hands and feet were small, the former exquisitely kept; his face was speckled like a toad's belly; his eyes deep brown—the left one with a slight cast; his hair black and crisp; his lips ripe red, very full and voluptuous, and his teeth of dazzling purity.

He seemed to favour notoriety. Hearing that I was the playwright he came to me, and, on the next seat's being left unoccupied, sat there and watched. He dispersed a rich smell of violets—it was said that his skin by some artificial means had been impregnated lastingly with their odour. When the play was done I bade him to a supper I had made for the actors; and there, though his language savoured of the empiric, he discoursed most interestingly, particularly on antipathies: in France he said he had kept a mistress who fainted at the sight of velvet; and even if it were drawn over her face in sleep she would instantly fall into convulsions. This, and such like information, kept us together till late in the morning. On parting he entreated me to visit him at his house

at Hampstead, where, he told me, the Lady Millicent was lying. I kept my own counsel about our former meeting, thinking it might give him some displeasure.

On the morrow I went, to find Sir Humphreville away from home, but expected shortly. I was shown into his library, a spacious chamber, lighted by a louvre of many-coloured glass, and lined with a collection of books such as I had never seen before in the house of a private gentleman. It consisted chiefly of modern poets and dramatists, memoirs in diverse foreign languages, works on witchcraft, chemistry, and astrology: on the whole being of more pretence than worth.

As I took up a new copy of Michael Scott's *Quæstio Curiosa de Natura Solis et Lunæ*, I heard the rustling of a woman's gown, and turning, saw Lady Millicent gazing at me with a mirthful face. She was much changed. As a child she had seemed sad and fantastic, now at twenty-four she had developed into a woman of heavenly beauty. Her face was white as snow, an admirable oval; her grey eyes clearer than crystal; her hair, which had not, as hair is wont, changed with the passage of years, fell in heavy curls down her back and over her bosom, held from her brow by an ornament of pearls.

'So we meet again,' she said. 'You were my fairy prince. I almost doubted that you had ever

really existed. It is very sweet to find you here. When they brought your name to me, years seemed to roll away. Ay me, for those long past days at Dorset's Park !' she sighed.

Somehow her words brought back the hollowness of my manhood. Would that we two were children again ! That once more I might run through the Park, where the jettos played and the squirrels squeaked, and the stately little maid kissed me. Lady Millicent noted my depression.

'Childhood is sweeter than barren knowledge,' she said in a low tone. 'For one year of unalloyed happiness I would sell all the rest of my life.'

As she spoke a curtain swung back, and one entered in the guise of a Saracen ; turbaned and bedecked with many precious stones. He passed round the room by the wall ; not until he reached the farther door did I observe his face. It was the most terrible I had ever seen. Heavy brows leaned over green and yellow eyes : the skin was puckered in huge wrinkles ; a few silver hairs swayed from his chin. His mouth was loathsome ; by some preternatural means the lips had been drawn almost to the ears, and in the gulfed space lay a hedge of black teeth, which being opened—the jaw hanging loosely on his breast—showed me in that short space that the tongue was missing, and its place taken by some white snake-

like roots. At the door he made his obeisance, accompanying it with a hoarse, frightful sound.

'It is Sir Humphreville's mute eunuch,' she said frowning. 'He has the leave of the house. My lord bought him from the Seldan. He is reputed to have stores of forbidden knowledge—Sir Humphreville sets a high value on him: they work for hours in the laboratory together.'

When the creature had gone she laid her hand on my arm. 'I have a fond belief that yonder gelding pollutes the air. Let us sit in my own chamber: there at least he is forbidden to enter.'

She accompanied me to a cabinet furnished in the richest, most extravagant fashion. The walls, where not hung with white satin, were of alabaster, fretted with mosaics of finely-beaten gold; the ceiling, also of white, but pierced with a crescent moon and stars that by some arrangement of changing mirrors and lights glittered more brightly than the real firmament. Tripods of silver with smouldering spills sent out dainty clouds that massed beneath this mock sky and filtered through its orifices.

There we sat and discoursed of our lives. She had heard of my fame; had even seen one of my comedies at White Hall. She made no attempt to grieve, but begged for information as simply as a begging child. When I had told her all, she began to relate her own history since her marriage.

Sir Humphreville (whom, as I had already noted, she spoke of in a constrained fashion) had returned from the Continent in her sixteenth year to take possession. The Earl of Dorset had died meanwhile; and her husband, after a year of quiet life, had been appointed ambassador to Naples. There she had passed three unhappy years, the women of Italy not being companionable, and Sir Humphreville overmuch engrossed in his philosophical researches. After that they had resided in England; at divers seats of the Campions; and now, Sir Humphreville being called to the Court, where he was in high favour because of his proposal to turn all the copper of the kingdom into gold, he had bought the house at Hampstead. Day by day, she said, he worked with the king in the royal laboratory.

When she had done, the noise of a coach in the yard made her rise. 'He has arrived. We will go back to the library,' she said timidly. So we returned thither, and almost before I could kiss her hand she retired. As I turned towards the window I caught sight of the mute, half hidden behind a heavy crimson curtain, with his foul face drawn into one most filthy grin. A curious fascination—as is felt of him that looks upon a cockatrice—took possession of me; and I stared until Campion's appearing, who came forward with a wry smile of welcome. I heard

afterwards that some most precious liquid had been spilled that morning by the king's carelessness.

When we had conversed for a while on the matters of playwriting—he himself was one of those discontented characters who aspire to everything, and he would ask much of me concerning the general make and conduct of a drama—the mate came forward, after sundry signs of impatience, and speaking as it were with his fingers, imparted some news to his master. From a motion of his head I understood that he was telling of my encounter with Lady Millicent; and my fears proved too well-founded; for Campion turned to me with a suspicious face, and, immediately, though with courteous words, he brought our interview to a conclusion, pleading that an important experiment would be destroyed if it were not viewed at once. He expressed no desire to see me again, whereto I was sorry; for my meeting with the woman whose memory I had cherished so long had filled me with a hope of many exquisite hours. But I went back to my house, and that same day gave Ardel Strype, my mistress, a small farm in Dorsetshire, and liberty to marry: then dismissed her, glad that it had lain in my power to make her becoming provision.

In the evening I went again to the play, and, as before, I saw Sir Humphreville Campion in

attendance on the royal party. I saluted him; but to my surprise had no acknowledgment. It seemed either that he had forgotten me altogether, or that some jealous fear had so blinded him that he could not force himself to be courteous. Next day the illness of my mother, who was living on her dower at Amnest, called me to her bedside, where I remained until the end, which took place a weeknight afterwards. The arrangements for her obsequies and the winding up of her affairs so engaged me that I had little time to think of other matters: indeed, I had half resolved to withdraw altogether from town life when news came that Sir Humphreville Campion had been despatched on a secret mission to the Court of Spain, and in the hope of meeting his lady I repaired to my house in Gracious Street. Here, to my amazement, I found an epistle, with the Campion crest of a dragon on the seal. It was from Lady Millicent herself.

'Sir,' it read, 'if it be true there are reasons why you should not visit me, I pray you explain them. I am alone here: Campion at this moment is in Madrid. I have little to tell except that every available word of your writing I have perused, and won great pleasure therefrom; that I would willingly play student to your better intelligence: there are many things I would choose to learn from you. Write to me on your return

from the country, and tell me that we may meet, and that shortly. All my old friends are alienated: you alone are left to remind me of an innocent past. But of this no more.—MILICENT CAMPELLO.

I went: she received me in state. The old Dowager-Countess of Dorel, blind and deaf by reason of her years, sat with us through the interview, and we talked to our hearts' content. A pretty fable Lady Millicent told me; called by herself *The New Andromeda*, which she had writ for a fancy of her own. 'Twas of a young child tied to a rock for a warlock to devour—another Dragon of Wantley, forsooth. The babe, innocent of her fate, plays and frolics; Perseus—or More of More Hall, or what you will—comes by,—is too innocent to understand the danger—and little mistress is left for the warlock. I could see that she meant her own history: I was the useless hero—she, the victim. Old madam nodded in her chair the while. When the time came to depart Millicent said she was leaving London on the morrow by Sir Humphreville's command, to retire to a country seat in the Yorkshire fells until her master's return. Byland Grange was the place: if I would honour it with a visit, she would herself show me the riches of the hills and valleys. That there was little of the really happy in the world she made no doubt: let each choose

his own joy. When I took her hand she said, 'Tis the same ring I wore at Dorell's: as years passed it chafed and was enlarged: now it chafes again.'

Three days afterwards I started to follow her, half in hopes to come up with her equipage, but it seemed she had the advantage and ever kept a day in front. I rode the two hundred and forty miles in four days, and it was on a Sunday afternoon when I led my horse into the yard of the Campion Arms, and bespoke a chamber. My man followed by post with mails; but I did not wait for ceremony, and having eaten in haste, I passed through the stately gates of the park. A spacious wilderness lay before me, netted with undergrowth green in the spring's triumph. Rivolets leaped across the clean stoned path, and crags frowned, their feet loved in clear pools, where strange waterfowl swam, their sides almost hidden beneath mosses and tangles of dove's-foot. Here and there belvideres watched down vistas, terminated by fish-ponds or stairlike ranges of rocks.

So great was the loveliness that I paused: in my most lively dreams I had never imagined sight like so perfect. As I stood I heard the cry of cuckoo, then from the distance the laughing mockery of a voice. Years rolled away like a mist, I was a boy again, she a girl; vice and dishonesty and sadness had all disappeared, and life

was fresh and sweet as in those days of old. I ran clapping my hands to a coppice of firs, which, as firs are used, had caught about its trunks a golden mist, and there I found Millicent, knee-deep in besucken.

There is a certain tremulous joy whose remembrance pains me almost too much to describe. When I said before that we were boy and girl again I spoke rashly, though children we were in a sense. But we were weaker because of our age : children love for very joy of heart and innocence, men and women love for love's sake. There was no reticence in either, we gave ourselves to each other with freedom and without shame. Neither had lived so long as to be unconscious that true love—true passion—is the completion of existence. She loitered at my side through the open park, where stands a ruined abbey, and along glades to the terrace of the house. Byland Grange is one of the strangest mansions in our country, standing against an abruptly rising cliff which mountain ashes and silver birches cover with greenery. The building is of red brick, with two wings and a court garden, and so covered with ivy that from the distance it seems like a cluster of rare trees with ruddy trunks and branches. The sun had taken the windows, and the whole front was chequered with glittering lights.

The great door stood open : we went into a hall

where stood wooden knights in complete panoply. At the end were two flights of stairs, which joined to a corridor that pierced the house; in niches fountains fell with pleasing music from satyrs' heads and dolphins' mouths. In a chamber of faded colours we sat together on the same settee, silently, heedless of the hours. Through the window we saw the moon disentangle herself from the tree-tops, the stars twinkle out one by one. Not until candles were brought did I take my leave, and then I entreated my mistress to meet me early on the morrow.

At parting she looked at me long and earnestly, 'We are carried away by some hidden current,' she said. 'Fusion has entrapped us; we must be happy and we must suffer! Thus!' And she stood tip-toe and kissed me; her warm sweet tresses falling on my shoulder. At my inn I tossed all night awake—a battlefield of hopes and fears; so that when I arose in the morning I was haggard and languid. Of that I took no heed; but hastily donning my clothes, I ate, and hurried to the meeting-place. I had not waited a minute before she swept down, tired-looking and big-eyed. She wore a royal gown, somewhat like one I had read of in a description of the Princess Elizabeth's wardrobe. It was of a pure satin, in colour betwixt apple green and rose; once it shone the one, again the other; and the skirt

was embroidered with eyes of amethyst and seed pearls.

In our talk we made no mention of Campion : 'twas as if each were in a little world some genius forbade him to enter. But as time passed we grew less and less masters of ourselves. This day our tongues were loosened, but neither rhyme nor reason came, and we babbled like boyden and hobble-de-hoy. In a little arbour near the abbey she had ordered a collation of fruit and wine to be placed, and at noon we ate and drank together ; then strolled on amongst the giant beeches. The heat of the sun overpowered us, and we sat to rest ; she unlaced her bodice to breathe the freer, and, like me, weary for lack of sleep, let her head sink back to the green grass. With the movement the kerchief fell loosely from her throat, and showed me, lying upon her breast, a curious miniature of myself, wrought by some unknown hand and framed in rubies. My hand caught hers ; I grew drowsier and drowsier until we slept. We lay thus for three hours, when both were awakened rudely by the sound of a thunder-clap. We sat up and beheld the skies of a uniform blackness. Heavy drops of rain began to fall ; almost ere we had reached the open we felt water on our skin. But the sight of the storm was so terrible and tragical that we took no care for ourselves. My mistress was not frightened : the

gods were holding a chariot race, she said, and indeed the rumbling sounded as if it were so.

The forks leaped across the fells : when they passed over water, it seemed to hiss ; avenues of flame opened from one end of the park to another. The strong wind caught the trees and made them kiss the ground ; the evening was pregnant with inquietude. We sheltered in an archway of the abbey : in mortal peril there, for stones that steamed with the uncooled heat were cast about our heads. It was well-nigh dark before there came a lull ; and Millicent was so outworn with the strife of the elements that she could scarce move. So I took her in my arms and stumbled across the wilderness to the Grange. There the servants, who were old and careless, had not so much as taken note of their lady's absence.

She hastened to her chamber, and sent dry clothes to me ; some *grandseigneur's* garments taken from an ancient press and heavy with the odour of musk. I donned them, and saw myself a courtier of Henry's time in doublet and hose of slashed velvet. The storm did not abate ; and when I descended from the place where I had shifted to a parlour on the ground floor, I had given to me a hasty note. 'I am tired,' it ran, 'to-night I cannot see you ; a bedchamber is prepared ; honour me by spending the night here.'

My heart sank now at the thought of times

apart from her; but I strove to wile the hours with a lute I found; and I made verses on my lady's beauty, which I wrote on some tablets that lay in the window-seat. At midnight I retired to bed, where, being still exhausted, I fell asleep immediately—to dream that terrible and most sweet day all over again. I woke in an hour. Outside the wind shrieked and howled: it shook the mullions; strange things rattled across the panes. My candle, which I had forgotten to blow out, was guttering in the socket.

Suddenly I heard a woman's cry—it was repeated—it rang above the noise of tempest: '*Francis, O Francis, help me! they are killing me!—they are killing me!*'

I sprang from bed and ran into the corridor, my feet clapping loudly on the plaster floor. At the further end was an open door, with a brilliant gleam. All indoors was quiet: on the threshold I paused, seeing a golden bedstead, hung with curtains of tissue, and the shape of a woman beneath the covering.

Again came that frightful cry—fainter and fainter, '*Francis, my Francis, help me!—help me!*'

Then I went to the bedside and tore aside the fabric; to behold my mistress's face all contorted as with fear and pain. Forgetful of all save my desire to drive away her torturing fancies (for I

'saw that she rode the wild mare), I leaped upon the pillow and caught her head to my lap, where the grey eyes opened in wonderment, and a flush spread over the cheeks. She gave one laughing sigh—a woman's whdany; then thrust out her arms and clasped my waist. . . .

At that moment came the sounds of bolts withdrawn and doors banging; then followed a loud tumult in the hall below—then a quivering of voices hushed by one sharp and loud. I would have drawn away for her sake; but her hands were locked.

'It is he,' she whispered. 'How he comes I know not. Stay with me to the end.'

The clamping of shoes, the clinking of spurs moved along the gallery; then Sir Humphreville and the mute came through the open door. Jealous hatred flashed on us from the knight's eyes; he held his sword before him; I could see him tremble.

'ADULTRESS!' He spoke no more than the one word.

Lady Millicent smiled—still from my lap. 'Think you so?' she said.

At a motion from him the Saracen came forward, holding a knife. The garments of both dropped water on the floor. The mute pricked those white fingers till they unclasped, then dragged me away. I flung myself upon him,

naked as I was, but his long arms held me like serpents, so that hardly might I breathe. Then Campion tore down one of the curtains and bound me to a chain. He seemed to meditate. Millicent his wife gave no sign of fear, but lay watching from her disordered pillow. At last he locked the door and stood between us.

'In all things I chose refinement,' he said. 'If I were a boor, both of you should die—both be sent into lasting damnation together. But as I hold that those who love meet in the next world, one of you shall go, the other be left, so that such joy you may not have. For my own ease, and the better that I may attend to my particular work, I think best that you, Madam Whore, should be the one to bleed.'

She stepped from the bed. 'Wonderful man, wonderful genius,' she said scornfully, 'I am ready.'

Campion tore off her lawn smock, so that she stood before us in naked beauty. 'Fie upon you!' she said, 'to treat a woman thus.'

He drew her towards a large silver bath that lay in an alcove, there he forced her to lie in the water. I began to struggle, but the gelding tied a kerchief round my neck, and offered the point of his knife at my heart. I tried to press forward on it, but he broke the skin, and then withdrew it. Again and again I strove, ever without success.

Then Sir Humphreville took from his breast an emerald pencil, which, being opened, revealed a tiny lancet. He knelt where Millicent lay, and breathed a vein in her lovely arm. A fountain of blood pulsed out, discolouring first the water around her shoulders, then circling in clouds to her feet.

She turned and brought her eyes to mine, they were laughing still.

'When we come together again, Frank,' she said faintly, 'twill be in God's sight.'

Dimness overcame my eyes, and for a while I could scarce see, but on my brain was printing the form of a naked woman lying on a mattress of blood and silver. . . .

'How we met boy and girl! how I loved you in my heart of hearts! Speak to me, Frank. Shall we . . . shall we be young again some day?'

I sought to answer, but my tongue forsook its office; at my side the mute made his horrid attempt at speech. Sir Humphreville drew himself upright and folded his arms waiting for the end. From the bath a steam began to rise, the smell of blood filled the room.

She made effort to turn on her side, but she could not. From her lips came the word *cuckoo*—just as she had mocked the bird at Doris's Campion knelt again and clapped his hand over her mouth, thinking haply she was jeering him in

death. Moan came after moan: such a sound as a weeping angel might make. There was a faint splashing, then silence.

. . . . It is all told.


What spells and charms were worked on me, I cannot tell. When six months after I found myself at Amnest, brought by means I knew nothing of, all desire of vengeance as of life had gone. It seemed to me, while Sir Humphreville lived, I could not publish this history to the world: for—perhaps by some enchantment learned in his pursuit of hidden knowledge—he had gained a great power over me. No will was left: I was doomed to feebleness both of mind and body.

Yet this scripture must be done, for traduction hath been at work with a most noble lady, and before I go to her I would fain have the world to understand.

MIDSUMMER MADNESS

PART I

THE MARRIAGE EVE

 HE had never looked fairer, for the full moonlight fell on her bosom and arms, and threw into her sweet face a statuesque quietness. For a while the curious question of whether the garden were or not a fitting background for her beauty passed me; but soon, with a self-pitying smile, I gave my attention again to her whose inspirations governed mine. She was leaning against a great vase, from whose margin toad's flax and creeping violets—flowers she loved—hung in clusters, with odours floating about in almost tangible clouds.

We were to be married on the morrow, and I was excited and was scarce myself. I dared not think of my courtship; for the knowledge that her affection was too great a gift—that I was

indeed unworthy to approach that white, delicious creature whose subtle potency forced me against my will to love her—this knowledge, I say, confounded me beyond belief.

Fate had thrown us together, ironically matching a woman whose story was irredeemably sad with a man wounded in a thousand struggles, who bore no other trophy to lay at her feet than a dead youth. She had stooped with more than human tenderness, and had raised me to her breast, and pressed my head there until the heated brow had cooled, and the temple-throbbings ceased.

As time passed I essayed a question. Had it not been desecration I would have leaned forward and pressed that bare shoulder with my lips. As it was, the purity hindered me: I could as soon have kissed the heavens.

‘Once more, Phyllida, for the last time in our unwedded life,’ I said, ‘tell me, with all your heart, if you love me?’

I looked for her simple assurance, accompanied by the fond chiding that maddened me; and waited tremulously for answering. None such came, and looking into her face I saw a strange air of abstraction. Wounded by her indifference, I repeated my question.

She turned wearily. ‘Why do you ask?’ she said. ‘I have often said that I love you. Let me be silent for awhile—not alone, (seeing that I was

hurt, and that I moved away)—‘your presence is enough for me: to know that you are here, and that I may touch you when I will.’

Vainly enough, jealous perhaps of her thoughts, I now strove to compare Phyllida with the splendour of her surroundings; and pained by her apathetic humour, I fancied as my eyes glanced over the landscape that her beauty suffered in comparison. Behind us lay the half-ruined gables of Colmer Hall. Hebe’s urn in the terrace fountain was brimful of clear water, and the mantle of scarlet moss that time had spread over the statue seemed freshly luxuriant in the clear-obscure of the moonlight. The windows of the morning parlour were thrown open, and the lamplight showed those quaint thread-embroideries of fabulous beast and fowl and fish; one outcome of the over-exuberant fancy of Phyllida’s ancestors, Margot Colmer.

In front lay the choked fish-ponds, with their pretentious water-stairs and sleeping reeds. To the right the beech-planting with its vistaed alleys sloped down to a howling river. To the left, through great elms, stretched the long barren view of fields and hills, chequered by mortarless limestone walls.

Then I looked again at Phyllida. I cannot attempt to describe her countenance in full. It did not approach any conventional type. White

and still and languid, with lips arched in the fashion old poets loved; clear-cut brows and perfect in fancifulness; in the chin power and voluptuous ease combined.

Here was more than a woman's height. Her gown was of snowy silk; one of those ancient costumes of which there was such store in the presses; the style was of the time of Anne. Gorgeous arabesques were woven in metal thread on bodice and petticoat; pictures of woodbine-covered lattices, idylls of corn-fields, of spring flowers budding. Twisted about one arm was a long string of glittering sapphires: clasped on the other a Javan bracelet of rich filigrain inwrought with rubies.

I stood fasting greedily on the sight, whilst I scorned myself for attempting to compare her to anything earthly. Her bosom had moved more freely since she had discarded the bloodstone heart. I was glad of its disappearance, for she would never disclose, although I had often begged to hear it, the story of how it had become here; and of late its presence had angered me unreasonably.

At last she looked up, and stretched her right hand to fondle mine.

'Mad genius,' she said gravely, 'can you burst into no wild ode about me? You are in the humour for tragedy. Remote as my thoughts have been, yet I have felt that you have wavered angrily

and striven to drive me into nothingness. But after all I am paramount.'

What could I do but lift her hand to my lips and press it until I was lost in the ecstasy of touching her flesh so for the first time. She withdrew it, seeing that I quivered from head to foot.

'Come,' she cried, with a mirth that I had never known her affect before. 'Come, let us return to the house. To-night, Rupert, of all nights, I have something to tell: something concerning the past I must make known.'

And she lifted her eyes to the moon, and held her hands fantastically forward, as if she expected the orb to fall from its setting. When she was wearied, she took my arm within hers and, leaning, walked to the entrance of the hall.

There the moonlight fell on the armed figures. The damascene breast-plates worn four centuries ago in French battles gleamed like Phyllida's gown. The bloody mort-cloth with the stained opals, that hung dusty and tattered by the door, twisted as if a strong current of air stirred behind. The lamp in the morning-room had burned so low that the air was tainted.

Phyllida left me, whilst I gazed at Anne Killigrew's portrait of James the Second and his queen. Was ever picture more ludicrous? Each crease of the royal draperies concealed a demon of darkness; in each feature of the royal countenances

was an excessive, wooden minuteness that deprived the dark, ugly faces of the faintest suggestion of life. The lacquer-framed tapestry to the left of the window offered as ever only a conflicting relief, for the enigma of the aureoled woman, who bore in her hand a bag of gold with the inscription *Holy Barbara bringeth Help*, could never be unriddled.

Suddenly a cry of wonder burst from my lips. A bust modelled in red clay had taken the place of the devotional book on the reading-table. It was the head of a man in the early prime of life, sweet, handsome, and priestly: the brow was high and narrow, the mouth painfully compressed, the tressure of such curls as would have graced a bacchanal. The crudeness of detail, and the luxuriance of fancy, showed me that Phyllida was the modeller.

A fierce murmur, like a wounded animal's, checked me as I laid my hand on the forehead to gauge its lack of breadth.

‘Touch anything but that! Do not let your hands corrupt it! Profane! profane!’

I turned aghast, to see Phyllida at my side. Her face was wan, her eyes red and swollen with tears. She seemed a pious witness of some random sacrilege.

‘What is wrong?’ I said. ‘What have I done? Am I so unworthy?’

Without heeding me she unfixed the bundle of papers she had brought, and having extracted several, she laid them on the table. Then, touching my arm, she motioned me to a chair, and in lamplight that glimmered and dimmed as the moon prevailed she began to read:—

'Sensuous hopes trampled upon; visionary joys despised. There is no future gladness. Dreading work. What are we more than a handful of faded leaves, tossed by the early winter wind? Some speed—others are checked and lie until corruption. I have reached a splendid goal; you, poor flower—poor slug-a-bed! . . . Alas! why should I chide, I of all men!'

'I do not understand,' I interrupted. 'Explain, Phyllida!' She gave no sign of hearing, but continued:—

'For our love had seemed impossibly great before. O heart of mine! is it that passion is dying—leaping high before burning out? I cannot breathe as I think of you—cannot sit, nor walk, nor lie, but must everlastingly fall with my spirit ebbing from my lips.'

At this I bowed my head and covered my eyes with my hand. What talisman gave Phyllida power to evoke such mental agony. The very fragmentariness of the selections maddened me. Each word seemed as if it might have been forced from me, or from one of my impossible heroes.

'You are mine for ever. Strive as you will against the gossamer network that I have flung over you; call on your God for assistance; curse me until you hate, and yet there is no remedy.'

The voice that had grown so soft as to be almost a whisper ceased now, and looking up I found that I was alone.

PART II

THE MARRIAGE MORNING

THE roofless building where Phyllida had desired our marriage to be solemnised lies in the outermost corner of the Colmer estate. I had only seen it once before; on a spring twilight when, reckless with undimmed passion, neither knowing nor caring whither I went, I had stumbled into the enclosure, where the scent of withering snowdrops filled the air.

Dreams that were beautified by traditions half understood before swept through my brain in the short disturbed sleep of the marriage morning. I saw Patrick Draxington killing the last wolf in England on the Wyke Quicksand, saw him staggering homeward to the manor-house with the monstrous head in his arms, and the wound in his side vomiting life-blood. Legends I had gleaned from the Colmer records came on in rapid succession:—I traced the histories of the Princess Ursula from Ravenna, who married Elizabeth's favourite, and slew herself so that on her deathbed

she might hear her husband declare his love revived; of Margot Colmer, who laid down her life for Charles the Second; of faithful Driden, the steward, who, like Catherine Douglas, strove to save his master at the cost of his right arm. A thousand other pictures followed. Indeed, I was just in the act of mounting a pillion to ride before a woman in sea-green paduasoy when I woke to find the sun risen, and the clock in the house-place striking four.

My wedding clothes lay beside the bed; I gazed at them for some time ere I rose, scarcely believing my own happiness; then, when I sprang to the floor, I drew aside the window curtain and looked down into the orchard. The cherries had ripened in the night; they were large and lush, with wasps a-grovel in the hurrying sweetness of their sides.

Never before had I been so slow or so proud about my toilet. The waistcoat my father had worn at his own nuptials was held up to the light at least twelve times so that I might catch the scintillations of the diamond buttons, and admire the white roses my mother had embroidered. There was a shade of vanity in my eyes as I stood before the mirror. After all, I was not ugly; for something in my face relieved its grotesque outline, and the change that had come of late—the flush that breathed in my cheeks, and the glad

dilation of the eyes—charmed me almost into egotism.

I had no friends to attend me to the chapel, for years ago I had broken with all the country gentry, and had lived like a recluse in Draxington Manor. Sometimes, but always vainly, I asked myself the true cause of this isolation; for the charge of infidelity was not of itself sufficient, and my writings, if they corrupted, corrupted out of the reader's wickedness. God knows that I wrote with a pure mind.

The world was glad, but drowsy withal; the songs of the birds were deadened, the chirpings of the grasshoppers less shrill, and even the shallow canal in the Pleasure (the canal I had planted with willows, in imitation of the Dean's work at Laracor) exhaled a sleepy odour. The path lay across ripening cornfields. Poppies were full-blown. I gathered a great bunch, for Phyllida loved them, and I fastened them in my waistcoat, intending to weave them in her hair.

She met me at the east entrance of Colmar Park. I ran open-armed to embrace her, but she drew back coldly.

'What do you mean?' she asked, looking into my face.

'How?' I cried. 'I am not late. I am here at the very moment!'

'You know what I speak of,' she replied coldly.

'What do you mean by being at all? I was contented, happy even, before you came. The past had died and you have revived it. I am going to break the most sacred vows.'

'Phyllida!' I exclaimed in amazement. 'What vows? I know that you have a past. Let us forget all our unhappiness——'

At this she raised her arm swiftly, as though she would strike me, then with a dull, heartless laugh she came nearer and caught my hand.

'Sometimes,' she said, 'I am as mad as you. It is well to be mad: we can suffer and enjoy a thousand times more keenly. Yes, Rupert, dear Rupert, lover, husband, mournful already, I can tell of what you are thinking. You are white now—there are red circles round your eyes.'

'Hush!' I faltered. 'If you read me well you will be silent. This morning I cannot endure at once to see your beauty and to hear your words!'

If I were nearly mad before, the sight of Phyllida, as she stood filled with conflicting emotions, was sufficient to blast for ever the few shreds of reason left me. She no longer wore a virginal colour, but a long rippling gown of flame-coloured silk, whose lowest hem was wrought round with yellow tongues. Her face was more tender, her chin trembled, and those eyes, into whose depths I had gazed for hours, and seen no change in their coldness, were filled with warmth and light.

When I had feasted on the sight I leaned forward, and clasping her neck and waist drew her to my bosom. There I held her until she cried out; but even then my arms would not relax, and she was compelled to extricate herself with a charming force. Being my first full embrace it made me delirious. She began to laugh again, childishly, silverily, and taking my hand she paced slowly at my side along the way that led to Stony Mountgrace.

We reached the ruined doorway, and stood beneath its wealth of carved foliage. The sound of boys' singing came from within. Phyllida herself had arranged everything with the old vicar of Draxington. How she had conquered his scruples against reading the ritual in a roofless building I never knew; but the place was still consecrated, and the altar tomb of Elizabeth Colmer, which in past days had been used as the holy table, still stood in the chancel under the east window, where the stained glass of Saint Anthony, with the human-faced swine crawling up his pastoral staff, cast subtle hues on the broken floor.

The words of the marriage hymn were indistinctly sung: the choristers' voices sounded cold and sharp, and the vicar looked almost frenzied with impatience.

'How is this, madam?' he said, with his

bearded face drawn into the severest lines. 'You beg me to come here as a favour, and when, after the considerations laid before me I agree, you keep me waiting until an hour after the appointed time!'

'An hour?' I gasped, looking not at the vicar, but at Phyllida. 'An hour late! Why we met at the moment——'

Phyllida was triumphant. 'Silence,' she whispered. 'I cannot explain, unless that we have dreamed.' She turned to the ascetic. 'I am ready to atone in any way for my fault,' she said contritely. 'Forgive me, sir, it was unavoidable.' And she made her eyes so pleading that he had been no man had he not calmed instantly and forgiven her for her guiltless offence.

'Enter,' he said. 'It is almost too late. Had you been absent five more minutes you would not have found me here.'

As we reached the apse the voices of the choristers swelled loudly, before dying in a long sustained murmur, and the vicar, with his tattered black-letter book held near his eyes, began to read the marriage service. Not a word did I understand: I repeated automatically when I was bidden to repeat, I forced the ring on Phyllida's finger at the ordained time. But all the while I thought of naught, or spiritual or sensual, save her incarnate loveliness.

Phyllida was mine now! Phyllida was mine now! Daintily I lifted her hand to my arm, and with the echo of the vicar's shrewish congratulations ringing in our ears we moved into the mid-day sunlight, and began to walk towards Colmer.

'You are my wife,' I said. 'Mistress Drasington, we are out of everybody's sight—these trees will hide us—you need have no shame in kissing me here.'

She made no reply: I turned towards her, imagining that she was wrought beyond speech. We had reached the Syre Marie Wood, where the great conifers screened off the sun. But one dusky shaft crowned Phyllida, and sliding from her head struck her fingers and danced there. Her face was set, her eyelids had fallen.

'Tell me, love,' I murmured. 'Let me help you: you know you are mine now. One kiss, just one, my meed if I have ever given you an instant's happiness.'

Neither word nor movement responded. She was impenetrably silent: her flame-coloured gown became a barrier of defence: I dared not touch her.

'Phyllida,' I entreated. 'My wife!'

Those wonted eyes were raised slowly. 'Wife,' she said, like one in a dream, 'I am no wife. I am true, true as Heaven itself. Do not write again, I will be true.'

Suddenly her face changed terribly, and she

drew herself to her full height. 'For God's sake, Rupert Draxington!' she cried, 'for God's sake tell me that it is not so!'

'What, dearest?' I said.

'My terror—that we are man and wife.'

'I am yours and you are mine—my wife—my wife.' And my tongue dwelt on the words with delight.

But Phyllida left my side, and, sitting on the trunk of a newly-felled tree, wept as her poor heart would break.

PART III

THE MARRIAGE NIGHT

A DULL fear troubled me from the moment when Phyllida, with many piteous words, begged me to leave her to herself until evening. Her face was averted all the time, although I strove to make her look at mine, in the belief that my agony at this phase might excite her pity and compel the confidence she withheld.

Assured that she loved me with all her soul, I had no distrust of her. Phyllida was the perfection of purity; in what I knew of her past she

had shone with a splendid chasteness, and not a breath had sullied her repute. The curious letters she had read the night before told of nothing but the holiest love, and the insinuation concerning an influence that would prevail was nothing more than a poet's fancy. I had conceived many such : in my story of *Hope Deferred* Michael strives to bind Mary so, and despite her fears of being his bond-maid for ever, at the dawn of a stronger passion, a stretching of the limbs, a higher inspiration breaks lightly asunder the shrivelled withes, and Michael becomes a memory and no more.

Thus, to a great extent, must it be with Phyllida. At the birth of her love for me she had broken most of the bonds—broken them unwittingly : for to-day she was unaware of her freedom, fancying that the past still held her and that she had sinned against fidelity. I knew otherwise ; the few films of gossamer that remained would soon disappear and leave her entirely mine.

Yet was I depressed ; and when, after her entreaties had wrung the promise from me, and she had begun to return to Colmer alone, I took her seat and followed with my eyes, as with a step uncertain and often lingering, she threaded the intricacies of the wood. When she had disappeared I prepared for a disinterment of memories.

The aromatic scent of the resin, as it oozed from the heated bark, overburdened the air. In a distant glade the light played so daintily that I amused myself by picturing scorpions sliding down the beams. I moved there and rested amongst sun-stricken trees, whose perfect silhouettes fretted the ground. A ripe-berried mountain-ash grew near—how it came in a fir-wood I cannot imagine—and a calver, undisturbed by my silent presence flew to the key-twigg and perched there crooning, until the leaves shook, and then all the boughs, and finally the trunk itself.

Had I been prophetic in my early writings? Had I suffered in the anguish I felt when writing the last chapter of *Hope Deferred* (in which Mary Blakemoor loses her wifely love and becomes self-concentrated) a forebode of my own doom? . . . Moreover in *Abaschar's Bride* the fairest hopes were blasted. . . .

But Phyllida was different—was stronger and purer than any of these visioned heroines; and surely I had a fiercer purpose than their lovers? Nay, as much as she excelled the women in beauty, I excelled the men in strength of will. I would not be thwarted. Who grapples with fortune conquers, and I would conquer!

What folly ramping in my brain made me imagine that such puppets could resemble my

living wife! I began to accuse myself of faithlessness, and grew desirous beyond endurance to touch her hands.

How slowly the afternoon faded! The day had been too fine for a gorgeous sky, so the sun, contented with his work, descended quietly into the tops of the distant trees, shook himself there for awhile, and then sank out of sight, leaving the clouds stained bright yellow. Soon after his departure a grey curtain crept up to the zenith, and blotted out the few stars that had already appeared.

I rose, determined to return to Colmer at a snail's pace. If I walked speedily I should reach the house before the time Phyllida had appointed: I might disturb her in the act of conquering her last few remembrances, and cause the past to rise drossily. My sadness left me, and I grew happy once more. As I loitered I drew one by one from my vest the withered poppies, and detaching the petals, let one fall at every step, giving to each flower a verse from some ancient ballad.

When all my poppies were destroyed I bethought myself of an image from Spenser's 'Ruines of Time,' and laughed again and again. It was of the ivory harp with golden strings that the poet saw borne up to heaven. Ah, my joy—mine!—was assured! No malicious intervention could hold me

from it now. In one short hour, in one short hour !'

Twilight deepened into evening as I walked ; soon large drops of rain began to fall, and the parched vegetation cried aloud with joy, as its fibres relaxed and its thirsty flowers drank their fill. There was a numness in the air that foretold a thunderstorm before morning.

Thrice a light blanced the heavens, showing me the distant avenue that led to the garden. The lime-trees were in full bloom, and the heavy shower beat the flowers to the ground. Scarce had my foot touched the velvety grass ere from the distance came the sound of voices in impetuous discussion. My wonder was great at any human creature's daring to walk in these weird precincts after nightfall.

The voices were those of a man and a woman ; the one commanding, the other pleading earnestly. They were coming rapidly towards me. Indeed I could already distinguish something black moving beneath the limes.

A flood of bombast rushed to my lips. The desire for something discordant almost overpowered me, forcing me to rack my brain for some bizarre scream wherewith to distract the love-making of these country sweethearts. Soon their speech resolved into distinct words ; it seemed as if they lingered.

'Nay, leave me! Take me no further! Was ever woman so tortured?' one cried loudly.

'Was ever woman so false? was ever woman so unworthy?' the other replied.

'But I swear, Cuthbert, I will not come. Oh, let me return! I love him—this very moment he is waiting for me. My darling Rupert, my husband. I *will* return.'

At these words I felt my stature lengthen: then sight, speech, everything left me save the quickened sense of hearing.

'Do you remember the old promises? Fool! to think of contending against my influence—to dream of setting that dullard's power against mine! You are mine, pledged so by God, joined to my soul in implacable union. Come, Phyllida.'

Silence followed.

Phyllida was false and I was wiseless. I leaned against the trunk of a lime, waiting for the last sight of the woman who had betrayed me so pitifully.

The footsteps approached nearer, and ere long a man passed. He was more fragile than I, and his long form was shrouded in a black cloak. His arms waved from side to side in magnetic rhythm, and his white face and hands shone like those of a corpse. I watched him, spellbound; and when he had gone a little way I heard

the voices begin anew. It was illusion—magic—anything but the terrible thing I had feared. The relief made me fall, face downwards, to the sodden grass.

In less than half an hour I entered Colmer Hall. Hester, Phyllida's old nurse, came to me at the foot of the staircase, and laid her hand upon my shoulder.

'Madam—may, pardon me—my lady, bade me say that she would be in the morning-parlour. She has waited long.'

I turned the handle of the door, and was confronted by darkness. Yet was I not appalled, for I could understand Phyllida's delicacy in wishing that our first meeting should be where her blushes might go unseen. I stole to the window, and sat on the praying-stool, with my eyes travelling through the gloom to her place. For the fourth time the sky blanched, and I saw her beside the table, resting her head on her hands, with her hair spread over shoulders and bosom in rippling swatches.

At last, wounded by her indifference, I spoke, and destroyed a delightful hope that she would bid me welcome.

'Phyllida!'

The old silence. I knew that she must be in one of those wonderful depths of feeling that she sometimes sounded, and felt proud of a woman

of such strange charms. But what had wayed in the mistress troubled in the wife.

'Are we not in perfect sympathy?' I cried.

Afraid of I know not what (the air in the room seemed turbulently struggling to pass through the closed windows), I opened the door and took one of the candles from a sconce in the hall.

'Phyllida! Phyllida! Phyllida!' I whispered, holding the light above my head. 'I am here, sweet one; look at me!'

Still silence. Fiercely, perhaps, but still lovingly, I placed my hands beneath her forehead, to make her look upwards. At my touch a bundle of papers fell from her breast, and lay scattered on the floor. The clay bust I had seen on my marriage eve stood near: I thrust out my right hand angrily and broke it into fragments. The past was done with now! I had conquered! My victory made me exultant. Phyllida's gossamer bonds were torn away for ever.

As I drew back the hair and let the candlelight fall softly on my wife's face she sighed heavily.

'Dead love has slain my passion,' she said.

THE LOST MISTRESS

PART I

THE AUTHOR'S STUDY



HALF-DEAD *Spirita Japonica* stood on the writing-table; reared against the pot was a miniature, which, as the only beautiful thing in the room, and, moreover, as the work of John Ravil himself, merits a full description. Not even the most ardent flatterer of the sex would have sworn that the woman was less than eight-and-twenty. She was reclining on a luxurious, shawl-covered chair, with a background of pale roses and quaintly shapen mirrors. One hand held a frontal of pearls just taken from the light-brown hair; the other a letter which she was reading with some tenderness. Her face was fair, her eyes of a rich blue. Firm and lustrous shoulders peeped through the smooth white muslin of her gown. Mother Eve could not have peered her physical charm.

John Ravil himself was grotesque even to ugliness. Of scarcely the middle height, ill-shapen in body, and husky voiced, his peculiarities were so marked that it was impossible for him to walk in the streets without exciting unfavourable comment. His complexion was neither light nor dark; and an odd look was given by a husky copper-coloured moustache, whose ends had never known training. An overhanging forehead, with knitted brows and stiff white hair that stood on end, completed the list of his most noticeable faults. Despite the marks of age, however, he was as yet only in his twenty-third year, and evidences of his youth were visible in his large brown eyes that seemed at times to belong to a young child.

To-day those eyes were full of terrified perplexity. A change had come into his life; the love that had sapped his fountain of inspiration, and hindered him in his struggle for bread, had grown more and more absorbing of late, and in proportion, the passion of the beloved one had dwindled. Life had nothing for him save this woman; fame could never come now, and in his unhappiness he felt himself degraded to the verge of the commonplace.

After awhile he rose, with a heavy indraught of breath, and opening the secret drawer of an old mahogany bureau took thence a small bundle

of letters, each enclosed in its gilt-edged envelope. A band of white paper, whereon was inscribed 'Flavia's Correspondence,' was tied round all. This he loosened, and taking the topmost letter, reverentially unfolded the sheet. It had been written soon after their first meeting. Flavia's hand was eccentrically masculine. 'Forgive me,' it ran, 'for being so obtuse last night in not divining the meaning of your words. You stung me somehow when you laughed at my singing: it was not till afterwards that I understood your laughter—strange and harsh as it sounded—as a far greater compliment than any other man could bestow. Truth to tell, I half resented the little speech that followed. *Why should I sing only alone or only for one?* Heaven knows that I have not a beautiful voice, but still I believe (and I am not an egotist) that I have the power of expressing the predominant sentiment of the song. *Addio*, stay, I often visit that alley of firs you admire so—in the afternoon of most fine days—and a voice sounds infinitely more spacious there. Shall I sing there alone?'

Here John Ravil hit his white lower lip until the blood oozed in scarlet drops. O the midsummer noon-tide; the trembling air; the golden dusk that clung around the fir trunks! Flavia had wafted towards him from the eastern glade, clad in azure and seeming like a cloud-

borne cherub. Cherubs sing too, and she sang; but no cherub ever sang as she. Only one sang—

‘Oh turn, love, oh turn I pray
I pritheas, love, turn to me.’

But such memories add to one’s agony.

The second letter, dated two months later, told of capitulation.

‘You did not come,—some scruple withheld you? If you had known how utterly sick I grew as the hours passed you would have pitied me. At every sound I gazed from my window, craving to see you on the terrace, your head downcast as ever; your eyes waiting for the brightness that my presence alone can bring. You are very cruel; I could not bear you to suffer as I do. Even when absent you magnetise me. Nothing appeals to me now—the gorgeous sunsets of late; the autumn foliage; the knee-deep drifts of already fallen leaves. Come to-night, my lover, my—I had almost blasphemed! Just to let my heart spring to yours, my blood leap through my body, my beauty grow paramount.’

Ravil sat for a while with his hands covering his face. The blood trickled down his chin and fell on the white sheet; he wiped it away, replaced the letter in its envelope and took the next. The tide of love was flowing yet.

‘Genius,’ it began, ‘poet-painter, genius of mine,

I thank you for your idealising of me. But I was never as lovely as the picture. I am almost glad that you insisted on retaining it, for I should have become jealous of its excellence, and perhaps destroyed it in some frenzy. How lively must my image be to you in absence !

'To other people you are grotesque (what you said was true); to me you are the handsomest in the world. I and none other have seen that wondrous lighting of countenance, have heard that quickening of the voice. At this moment I could tear myself without a murmur from the vain world, to dwell in some remote garden where conventionalism triumphs not ; where we should exist for each other, and let our lives form one perfection. Come to-night : I will sit with your head cushioned on my breast. Bring your story and let us cry together.'

Soon after this the woman's passion had begun to fade. Ravil knew what was in the other letters. She had wearied slowly of the goddess. Her feeling had been too fervent to endure. She was healthy and full-blooded. Another, 'a sweet-haired Hercules,' had taken her fancy ; and with the admission of this second love all the old worship had grown lukewarm. In proportion, however, as she had become less infatuated, he had descended almost to madness : had crossed over humbly that she would consider the wrong she was doing him ; had sworn that if she

were false to him, life would hold naught of goodness more.

Men as highly strung and as unfortunate have little sustaining strength. Fate, the evil god-mother, bestows an excess of imaginative power, and Nature, angry in the unwelcome gift, takes her spite out of the unsinuing god-child, and makes him timorous and unmanly.

Flavia's last letter must have cost her an effort. Each word was as a dart through his vitals.

'My love, there is a certain proverb which I am not powerful enough to disprove, that the constancy of women exists more in fiction than in reality. You accuse me of no longer loving you? In a measure you are wrong: your friendship will be more to me than anything in life. One way I have failed. Forgive me if I tell you that you will ever appeal to my spiritual part. We never could have married; in my cooler moments I have often acknowledged myself too cowardly to cross the bridge between our ranks. The homage of my kind is necessary after all. Let us regard the past as a pleasant episode.

'Apparently you have heard the rumour of my approaching marriage. Let me beg of you one thing: in honour you are bound to return my letters; yours are ready in exchange. I shall be much pained to part with what has given me almost preternatural pleasure. Why should we not meet and bid each other good-bye?'

PART II

THE LADY'S BOUDOIR

The chamber was softly radiant with mother-o'-pearl colours, all so blended that by contrast a woman's face might wear a heightened charm. Plants with pale leaves and white flowers filled the oriel; dusky mandarins leered in corners; chastened pictures hung on the silk-covered walls. Before each window was drawn a gleaming screen.

Flavia rose from the piano with a great sigh: tears were rolling down her cheeks (evidently the song had suggested woe), and some fell on the brown cover of a volume that lay on the table. It was John Ravi's *Fever's Apple*, a romance which, he had once dreamed, was like to bring him fame. Flavia took it up and held it over her breast until it was warm. It should ever be the dearest book in the world! Although love was dead, gratitude remained. For his short hour her lover had been all-in-all; through him she had tasted of intellectual pleasures unknown before their meeting.

'He will bear it well enough in time,' she sighed; 'it will give him strength for his work; he will use his Oriental richness no longer,—will

curb his luxuriance, and develop an epigrammatic style, which, being coupled with that fine imaginativeness of his, must needs fillip him into popularity.'

The thought gave consolation, and she became herself again in mentally comparing the two lovers: the one saturnine, ugly, oppressive; the other bright, laughing, and handsome—her ideal of manhood. Sure 'twas only in an unwholesome dream that Ravi! had been victor?

She raised the lid of her cedar desk and took his letters from their nest amidst dried rose-leaves. Then she sank back to her favourite chair, leaning almost in the same posture as in the miniature. The collection was unfettered and placed in her lap, and soon, with a few more sighs, she raised the sheets for a last reading.

Even for letters of passion they were extravagant: the weakness of his nature, his need of a restraining power, was manifest in each. They were almost hysterical: no man healthy in body and mind could have written them. Yet Flavia's face grew troubled, and her lips moved pitifully.

'Why did you look at me so,' the first began, 'look at our first greeting as if I had been by your side all my life? You brought a strange fluttering to my heart; you stopped my breath; the room whirled round and round. You must have thought me a very fool in the incoherent

words I spoke. You may guess the cause; my oppressed brain had never permitted me even to imagine such beauty as yours.

'Only once before in my life have I known such a feeling: I had read a story told of love and death under a southern sky. The hot malaria, the aroma of lilies, the thick water, seemed to envelop me, and I swooned. It was like rain on parched ground to find myself still in my own room, nodding my head to the bunch of yellow-flags I had bought of a child at the door.

'But now I swoon again, and the awakening can only come at the transition into the next world's darkness.

'I am in love's wine-press, shrieking at the weight that must descend and crush out new-born joy. Give me, in the name of God, one word of tenderness, and forget that I ever dared to lift my eyes.'

As Flavia read she smiled, as women smile upon a baby thrusting out a tiny fist with broken flowers. As free and natural a gift was Ravil's love. Her eyes grew tender: she looked at her shoulder just as if his head were resting there.

'Poor head, poor coarse hair!' she said.

The next letter treated of some declination.

'You have tortured me cruelly. When you rode past on the road, I stamped in the dust till my folly was manifest, even to myself. Who is he?

I insist on knowing. When I saw him loose-mouthed and peering right into your pupils all the tigerish part of me sprang up, and I could have destroyed him for his temporary usurpation of my rights. How dared he look at you so? All right I lay awake, calling upon your name, praying for some miracle to bring you to my chamber.'

Flavia remembered her exultation when her fingers tore this sheet open: how she had been so merry as to sing and run and play like a young girl. She passed hastily over more, and came to that he had written after she had yielded him her honour. Her own letters had feebly echoed his at the time.

'Sweetest and noblest,' it ran, 'life has changed. The dense veil that shrouded my future has been withdrawn. To-day I feel infinitely more inspired than ever I felt in my youth. A myriad rich ideas float from my brain, and were it not for very impatience of the hour of our meeting I would sit at my table and write some grand epic, or some romance that would shake the centre of every heart. Love! love!'

Flavia's eyes glittered now; but grew languid quickly as she fell to picturing old scenes. The minutes passed and passed, ere she returned to her task. The letter she took had signs of a lover's doubts.

'I awaken in madness; for the dread that grows in my companionless nights deepens towards morning. Suppose that Flavia had never really loved me;—suppose that I had been only her last dearly-paid-for whim;—suppose,—say, now I have written it my fears go in laughter. Flavia is the paragon: I alone understand her mystery. Any man less initiated in the secrets of her character might declare that to me her outward demeanour was cold. But I glory in her apparent lack of feeling, conscious that my position is impregnable, and that her passion, though chastened, is still powerful.'

The white shoulders were shrugged. 'How lacking in discrimination!' Before he had written thus she had been absolutely discourteous, whilst he had ever refused to understand. It was her remark, that change is necessary to existence, which had evoked this strange protest. Besides, she knew herself to be inconstant in thought. The hours spent in his company, which at first were almost unearthly in their speed of flight, were dull and wearisome now, and she had grown to hail the time of his departure with something akin to pleasure.

Six more letters were passed unopened—much less unread. Then she unfolded the last—his reply to her renunciation.

'Flavia, it is hard to think that you of all the

world should care to jest with me. That your letter is anything more than a jest I am struggling not to believe. After all your vows, breathed as you lay in my arms, whispered in a tone that made me vibrate like a harp-string, you should not play with my feelings. You know me, darling: it was unkind.

‘O God in heaven, I dare not believe it! I will not! I cannot! My mind is not large enough to take in so monstrous a truth!’

‘We will meet to-morrow in the wood, and laugh together at the frightened fool you have made of me! and in revenge I will be sardonic and cruel.’

PART III

LOVE LIES BLEEDING

Slovenly fir alleys; bounded at one end by a darkly mantled fish-pond, at the other by an open park, with grazing deer and cattle. Birds avoid these fir-woods: this one was silent, save for a low boom of insects and the dwarfish whistling of shrew-mice.

Ravil was first at the meeting-place. He rested in a cathedral-like vista overarched with olive—the glade where Flavia had sung. The wiry

grass was hot with the sun, the air thick with fragrance.

He waited in gladness. As the time had drawn near much of his dread had vanished, and although he still felt like a man who stands with his back to a pit, on whose verge his heels are pressing, the light beating on his brain so decided him that little save the maddest joy was left.

In the interval he conjured up visions of her beauty: his lips moved as if to kiss. He reviewed for the thousandth time the history of their passion. No false humility had ever troubled him; and despite the worldly distinction between noble and plebeian, he saw himself her equal at all points. In his egotistical belief, the highest patent of nobility should be bestowed on those with unplumbed depths of feeling, with superior capacities for suffering.

At last she came, not in aure this time, but in a gown of plain russet, such as any of the cottagers' wives on her land might have worn. But something exquisite in her manner of wearing it showed the gentle rounding of her breasts, the rise and fall of her breathing. A flush spread over her face as he rose to greet her; at the sight the old hunger came, and he bent his head to hers.

'Once,' she said very faintly.

There was a note of sublime renunciation in her voice. If she had loved him with all her heart,

and had discovered that his future required the breaking of the unlawful bond, she could not have shown a nobler pathos. He flung his arm about her neck, and half-savagely kissed her ripe lips.

Soon she drew apart. 'You hurt me,' she said. 'There is not much time. . . . I must return soon. . . . there are people . . . He . . . '

He fell back with contorted mouth, for the lash had agonised him with its subtle poison. Pity filled her, and she soothed him with velvet caresses, tried to flatter him with hopes of fame. 'Twould be best for him; in after years they would meet, he jubilant with men's praise, she saddened and broken in by the legal bond. For his sake, all for his sake.

When he had recovered somewhat he strove to discover the truth in her eyes. It was a profitless task.

His chin began to tremble. 'Here are the letters,' he whispered huskily. 'Keep mine. . . . Leave me here. . . . Good-bye.'

Flavia went weeping away. Ere she had walked a mile a sudden thrill shook her from head to foot, and she sank down to the grass. A wonderful light shone from her face. Life's greatness was upon her: her lover's child had stirred within her body.

Born of womanly ecstasy, born of the pain of

parting, love that before had been a sickly dwarf, opening up a ruddy giant. O the bliss, the ten-fold bliss of passion revived !

She hurried to the place where she had left him, wild to pour out her secret on his breast. He was there still, but white and rigid, and with a purple wound in his temple.

WITCH IN-GRAIN



For late Michel had been much engrossed in the reading of the black-letter books that Philosopher Bale brought from France. As you know I am no Latinist—though one while she was earnest in her desire to instruct me ; but the open air had ever greater charms for me than had the dry products of a library. So I grudged the time she spent apart, and throughout the spring I would have been all day at her side, talking such foolery as lovers use. But ever she must steal away and hide herself amongst dead volumes.

Yesternoon I crossed the Roods, and entered the garden, to find the girl sitting under a yew-tree. Her face was haggard and her eyes sunken ; for the time it seemed as if many years had passed over her head, but somehow the change had only added to her beauty. And I marvelled greatly, but ere I could speak a huge bird, whose plumage

was as the brightest gold, fluttered out of her lap from under the silken apron ; and looking on her uncovered bosom I saw that his beak had pierced her tender flesh. I cried aloud, and would have caught the thing, but it rose slowly, laughing like a man, and, beating upwards, passed out of sight in the quincunx. Then Michal drew long breaths, and her youth came back in some measure. But she frowned, and said, 'What is it, sweetheart? Why hast awakened me? I dreamed that I fed the Dragon of the Hesperides Garden.' Meanwhile, her gaze set on the place whither the bird had flown.

'Thou hast chosen a filthy mammet,' I said. 'Tell me how came it hither?'

She rose without reply, and kissed her hands to the gaudy wings, which were nearing through the trees. Then, lifting up a great tome that had lain at her feet, she turned towards the house. But ere she had reached the end of the maze she stopped, and smiled with strange subtlety.

'How earnest thou hither, O satyr?' she cried. 'Even when the Dragon slept, and the fruit hung naked to my touch. . . . The gates fell to.'

Perplexed and soon adread, I followed to the hall; and found in the herb garden the men struggling with an ancient woman—a foul crone, brown and pockered as a rotten costard. At

sight of Michal she thrust out her hands, crying, 'Save me, mistress!' The girl covered, and ran up the perron and indoors. But for me, I questioned Simon, who stood well out of reach of the wretch's nails, as to the wherefore of this hurly-burly.

His underlings bound the ransomed with cords, and haled her to the closet in the banquetting gallery. Then, her beldering being stilled, Simon entreated me to compel Michal to prick her arm. So I went down to the library, and found my sweetheart sitting by the window, transfixed with seeing that goblin fowl go tumbling on the lawn.

My heart was full of terror and anguish. 'Dearest Michal,' I prayed, 'for the sake of our passion let me command. Here is a knife.' I took a poniard from Sir Roger's stand of arms. 'Come with me now; I will tell you all.'

Her gaze still shed her heart upon the popin-jay; and when I took her hand and drew her from the room, she strove hard to escape. In the gallery I pressed her fingers round the haft, and knowing that the witch was bound, flung open the door so that they faced each other. But Mother Benmusk's eyes glared like fire, so that Michal was withered up, and sank swooning into my arms. And a chuckle of disdain leaped from the beg's ragged lips. Simon and the others

came hurrying, and when Michal had found her life, we begged her to cut into one of those knotted arms. Yet she would none of it, but turned her face and signed no—no—she would not. And as we strove to prevail with her, word came that one of the Bishop's horses had cast a shoe in the village, and that his lordship craved the hospitality of Ford, until the smith had mended the mishap. Nigh at the heels of his message came the divine, and having heard and pondered our tale, he would fain speak with her.

I took her to the withdrawing-room, where at the sight of him she burst into such a loud fit of laughter that the old man rose in fear and went away.

'Surely it is an obsession,' he cried: 'nought can be done until the witch takes back her spells!'

So I bade the servants carry Benmsk to the mere, and cast her in the muddy part thereof where her head would lie above water. That was fifteen hours ago, but methinks I still hear her screams clanging through the stagnant air. Never was hag so fierce and full of strength! All along the garden I saw a track of uprooted flowers. Amongst the sedges the turmoil grew and grew till every heron fled. They threw her in, and the whole mere seethed as if the floor of it were hell. For full an hour she cursed us fearfully: then,

finding that every time she neared the land the men thrust her back again, her spirit waxed abject, and she fell to whimpering. Two hours before twelve she cried that she would tell all she knew. So we loosed her, and she was loosened of her bonds and she mumbled in my ear: 'I swear by Satan that I am innocent of this harm! I ha' none but pawtry secrets. Go at midnight to the lows and watch Baldus's tomb. There thou shalt find all.'


The beldam tottered away, her bemired petticoats clapping her legs; and I bade them let her rest in peace until I had certainly proved her guilt. With this I returned to the house; but, finding that Michal had retired for the night, I sat by the fire, waiting for the time to pass. A clock struck the half before eleven, and I set out for King Baldus's grave, whither, had not such a great matter been at stake, I dared not have ventured after dark. I stole from the garden and through the first copse. The moon lay against a brazen curtain; little snail-like clouds were crawling underneath, and the horns of them pricked her face.

As I neared the lane to the waste, a most unholy dawn broke behind the fringe of pines, looping the boles with strings of grey-golden light. Surely a figure moved there? I ran. A curious motley and a noisy swarmed forth at me.

Another moment, and I was in the midst of a host of wensels and hares and such-like creatures, all flying from the precincts of the tomb. I quaked with dread, and the hair of my flesh stood upright. But I thrust on, and parted the thorn boughs, and looked up at the mound.

On the summit thereof sat Michel, triumphing, invested with flames. And the Shape approached, and wrapped her in his blackness.

THE NOBLE COURTESAN

HE *Apology of the Noble Courtesan* was fresh from the printers; the smell of ink filled the ante-chamber. The volume was bound in white parchment, richly gilt; on the front board was a scarlet shield graven with a familiar coat-of-arms. Frambant turned the leaves hastily, and found on the dedication page the following address:—

*' To the Right Honourable Michael, Lord
Frambant, Baron of Britton*

*' My Lord,—It is not from desire of pander-
ing to your position as one who has served his country
wisely and well that I presume to dedicate to you
the following Apology. A name so honoured, a
character so perfect, need no illaming. 'Tis as a
Woman whose heart you have stirred, into whose
life you are bound to enter. For know, my Lord,
that women are paramount in this world. In the*

after-sphere we may be Apes, but here we are the Controllers of Men's fates, and so, in the character of one whom you have stricken with love, I profess myself, my Lord, your Lordship's Most Obliged and Most Obedient Humble Servant,

THE NOBLE COURTESAN.'

Fransant flung the book angrily across the room. What trull was this who dared approach him so familiarly? His brows contracted; his grey eyes shot fire; a warm dash of blood drove the wanness from his cheeks. The very thought of strange women was hateful: it was scarce a year since the wife he had won after so much striving had yielded up life in childbed, and he had sworn to remain alone for the rest of his days. Catching sight of his reflection in a mirror, he saw resentment and disgust there.

But when he looked again at the book he found that a note had been forced from its cover. Curiosity overcame, and he stooped and took it in his hand. Like the dedication it was addressed to himself: he unfolded it with some degree of fear.

'You will infinitely oblige a distressed Lover,' he read, 'if you meet her at Madam Horneck's bagnio. Midnight's the time. She will wear a domino of green gauze, a white satin robe braided with golden serpents.—CONSTANTIA.'

This communication fascinated him, and sitting

down by the window he began to read the wildest book that ever was written. It was a fantastic history of the four intrigues of a fantastic woman. Her first lover had been a foreign churchman (an avowed ascetic) who had withstood her sieging for nearly a twelvemonth; her second, a poet who had addressed a sequence of amorous sonnets to her under the name of Amaryllis; her third a prince, or rather a king's bastard; and her fourth a simple country squire. Some years had elapsed between each infatuation, and madam had utilised them in the study of the politer arts. The volume teemed with quotations from the more elegant classic writers, and the literature of the period was not ignored. The ending ran thus:—

‘It has ever been my belief that love, nay, life itself, should terminate at the moment of excess of bliss. I hold *Secrets*, use of which teaches me that after a certain time passion may be torted with the same keen joy as when maidenhood is resigned. But, as the lively L’Estrange declares, “the itch of knowing *Secrets* is naturally accompanied with another itch of telling them,” I fling aside my pen in fear.’

As he finished reading his brother Villiers entered the room. He was ten years Frankham’s junior, and resembled him only in stature and profile. His skin was olive, his eyes nut-brown,

his forehead still free from lines. He leaned over the chair and put a strong arm round his brother's neck.

'What is this wondrous book, so quaintly bound?' he said. 'By Venus, queen of love, a wagtail's song!'

Frambant flushed again, and raising the *Apology* flung it on the fire, where it screamed aloud.

'It is the work of an impudent woman,' he replied. 'To-morrow all town will ring with it. She has dedicated it to me.'

'Surely a sin to burn such a treasure! Let me recover it.'

Villicers took the tongs and strove to draw the swollen thing from the flame, but it collapsed into a heap of blackness. The note, however, which Frambant had replaced, lay unscorled in the hearth, and the lad read its message.

At that moment one came with word that Sir Benjamin Mast, an old country baronet whom Frambant held in high esteem, lay at the point of death. 'The water crept higher and higher, and my lady thought you might choose to be with him at the last. The coach waited.' Frambant hurried downstairs, and was soon with the dying man. Sir Benjamin's hydropey had swollen him to an immense size, but his uncowed soul permitted him to laugh and jest with heart till the end. His

wife, a pious resigned woman of sixty, shared the vigil.

Darkness fell, and the chamber was lighted. Forgetful of all save his friend's departure he never remarked the passage of time, and not until after midnight when Mast's eyes were closed in death did his thoughts recur to the *Apology*. He took his seat in the coach with a grim feeling of satisfaction at the imaginary picture of the wanton waiting, and waiting in vain.

After a time, being wearied with excitement and lulled by the motion of the vehicle as it passed slowly along the narrow streets, he let his head sink back on the cushion, and fell asleep almost instantly. Five minutes could not have passed before he woke ; but in the interval a curious idea had entered his brain. He remembered Constantia's account of her lovers, and her belief that life should wither at the moment of love's height, and simultaneously there came upon him the recollection of four tragedies which had stricken the land with horror. So overwhelming was the connection that he could no longer endure the tediousness of the journey, but dismissed his coach and walked down the Strand.

The first case was that of the Cardinal of Castellamare, who had been exiled from Italy, and who, after attending a court ball and mixing freely with the dancers, had been found dead on

his coach ; his fingers clutching the pearl handle of a stiletto, whose point was in his heart. Then, in the same conditions, Meadows the laureate, the Count de Dijon, and Brooke Gordon the Derbyshire landowner, had all been found dead. No trace of the culprit had been found, but in every case was the rumour of a woman's visit.

He reached the old road where stood his house, and stumbled against a weird sedan that waited in a recess by his gateway. An arching horn-beam hid it from the moonlight. Two men stood beside it attired in outlandish clothes. Frambant stopped to examine the equipage, and at the same moment a link-boy approached. He called for the light, and to his wonderment found that the bearers were blackamoors with smooth-shaven heads and staring eyes.

The sedan was of green cypress embellished with silver ; a perfume of oriental herbs spread from its open windows. Frambant asked the owner's name, but the men with one accord began to jangle in so harsh a tongue that he was fain to leave them and go indoors.

In the antechamber a great reluctance to pass further came upon him, and he halloed for a serving-man. Frambant was merciful to his underlings, keeping little show of state. Rowley, the butler, came soon, half-dressed and sleepy. On his master's inquiry if any visitor had entered

the house, he protested that he knew of none, though he had waited in the hall till past midnight. So, at the word of dismissal, he retired, leaving Frambant to enter his chamber alone.

He took a candle and went to the place where hung the portrait of his wife. There he paused to gaze on the unearthly loveliness of face and figure. His eyes dimmed, and he turned away and began to undress; but he was wearied and troubled because of his friend's death, and when his vest was doffed he threw himself upon a settle.

Presently the ripple of a long sigh ran through the sleeping house. Frambant sprang to his feet and went to the antechamber. There he heard the sound again: it came from the west wing, which for the last year had been reserved for Villiers's use. He caught up the candle and hurried along the cold passages. At his brother's door he paused, for through the chinks and key-hole came soft broken lights.

A woman was speaking in a voice full of agony:—

'Infamous, cruel deceiver! I have loved another, and given myself to thee!'

Again came that long sigh. Well-nigh petrified with fear, he fumbled at the latch until the door swung open. A terrible sight met his eyes.

Villiers lay stark on the bed, a red stain spreading over his linen. On the pillow was a mask

that had been rent in twain. Beside him stood a tall, shapely woman, covered from shoulder to foot with a loose web of diaphanous silk. Her long hair (of a withered-bracken colour) hung far below her knees; a veil of green gauze covered the upper part of her face. She was swaying to and fro, as if in pain.

'Dastard,' she wailed. 'Thou hast attained the promised bliss unjustly. In my arms all innocently I slew thee, praying for thy soul to pass to my own heaven.'

Frambant's lips moved. 'My brother! my brother!'

The woman turned, glided towards him, and sank to her knees. She laughed, with the silver laughter of a child who after much lamentation has found the lost toy.

'It is thou,' she murmured. 'Let us forget the evil he hath wrought against us—let us forget and—love.'

She put out her hand to grasp his, he lifted his arm and thrust her away.

'Touch me not!' he cried.

She rose and faced him, supporting herself by grasping the bedpost.

'He has wronged us foully,' she said. 'The lost love—the flower of my life—he would have cheated me of it!'

'Murderess! murderess!'

Her breath came very quickly; its sweetness pierced her veil and touched his cheek.

'What evil thing have I done?' she asked.

'Tis my creed to love and to destroy.'

Frambant went to the further side of the bed, and felt at his brother's heart. It was still, the flesh was growing cold. He flung his arm over the dead breast and wept, and Constantia stole nearer and knelt at his side.

'God,' she prayed, holding her hands above her head, 'pervert all my former entreaties, let all the punishments of hell fall upon the dead man! Sustain the strength that has never failed, that I may conquer him who lives.'

Frambant staggered away; she locked her arms about his knees.

'Listen,' she said. 'I loved thee from the first moment. . . . When we met at the bagnio, he was disguised—not until I had killed him and looked on his brow did I know the truth.'

He made no reply, but considered the corpse in stony horror. So she released her hold and stood before him again.

'O cold and sluggish man! Why should I faint now? Cleopatra bought as hard a lover's passion.'

With a sudden movement she undid her robe at the neck, so that it whispered and slipped down, showing a form so beautiful that a mist

rose and cloaked it from his eyes,—such perfection being beyond nature.

He moved towards the door, but she interrupted him. ‘Is not this enough?’ she cried. And she tore away the green veil and showed him a face fit to match the rest. Only once before had he seen its wondrous loveliness.

Again his eyes were drawn to Villiers. How he had loved the lad! Very strange it was: but at the instant his mind went back to boy-hood, when he had made him hobby-horses.

‘You have killed my brother! you have killed my brother!’

Constantia laughed wearily. ‘Enough of that mixture of iron and clay. What is the penalty?’

‘The law shall decide.’

She sprang forward and drew the knife from Villiers’s breast. Frambant, however, forced it from her hand.

‘For love of the wife who died, who even now is pleading at God’s throne for me?’

Frambant’s fingers relaxed. ‘Hush!’ he said.

‘If I must die let it be at thy hands.’

‘As you will: here . . . write.’ He took a quill from the table and dipped it in the pool of stiffening blood.

Then he dictated, whilst she wrote in a firm hand.

‘I, Constantia, the Noble Courtesan, after slaying

five men, meet with a just punishment. Seek not to know farther.'

She pressed close to him, smiling very tenderly. Her eyes were full of passionate adoration. As he raised the knife to her breast she caught his disengaged hand between her own. . . .

Franchant wrapped her in the gown. Then after pinning the paper at the head, and covering all with the gown of white satin that was braided with golden serpents, he carried her through the house and garden. Dayspring was near, the light appalling.

He reached the cypress sedan and laid his burden inside. The two blackamoors, who had gibbered deeply the while, caught up the poles and bore the Noble Courtesan away.

THE WRITINGS OF ALTHEA SWARTHMOOR



PORTRAIT of *Althea Swarthmoor* hangs in the library of the House with Eleven Staircases. She is depicted (by Kaeber's brush) as a tall, thin woman of about thirty, somewhat sallow in the matter of complexion, and with deerhound eyes. Her crisp black hair is drawn plainly from an admirably arched brow, and there is a perplexed look about her lips.

Doctor Marston's miniature hangs beside—the presentment of a corpulent, thick-necked divine with a fair skin, pallid eyes, and a sensuous mouth. Herrickian curls lie flat on the temples. A naive grace is manifest in the dimpled chin and complacent cheeks.

The literary remains of *Althea* are cofined in sheepskin on the topmost shelf of the bookcase. The *Swarthmoors* have a strenuous objection

to the opening of this volume, for the episode of their seven times great-aunt is supposed to reflect no honour on the family. However, a few specimens of her fantastic letters, culled at random, can harm neither them nor the reader.

ALTHEA SWARTHMOOR TO DR. MARSTON.

THE HOUSE WITH ELEVEN STAIRCASES,
12th May 1700.

Do not fear, good Doctor, that I shall ever lose the remembrance of those tender words you spoke in the maze & other evening. It is not necessary to copy them down for me; for they seem part of some rich painting, whereof the hanging moon and the stars form the background—such a picture as shall ever remain before my view. Yet I thank you for your kind proffer, and, whilst I fortify you, entreat you to know that I am depriving myself of what would be a most valued souvenir. Commend me to madam your wife; and understand that I am most cordially your ever faithful friend to serve you.

DR. MARSTON TO ALTHEA SWARTHMOOR¹

BALFOURIE IN LANCASHIRE,
20th May 1700.

Honoured Madam,—I was writing my discourse for the Sunday when the messenger brought

¹ This letter is the only one preserved.

your most gracious epistle. Truly a great happiness hath fallen to me ! When I declared myself as one whom the power of your presence and the fascination of your glances conquered, I felt the same spirit as is described by the lover in the Canticles—*Turn away thine eyes, for they have overcome me*. In the pulpit I shall next hold forth on the Shulamite and her would-be spouse. A fig for those who fondly believe the Church is meant ! 'Tis an idyllic cry of passion betwixt real man and real woman ; the preparative for as rich a marriage song as the world ever imagined. Yet, madam, to you alone dare I acknowledge this idea. We are both freed (in mind) from the conventional ; but the world is apt to be censorious with those who have strength to think apart from the multitude. Therefore my treatment of the old love-song must be in the usual veil of supposed prophecy. How rarely does it befall a man to have such a friend (if I dare think you my friend) as you ! Let me see you soon : I have a thousand thoughts to elaborate—a thousand religious fears to overcome. My poor wife is at present sunning herself among the herbs ; she is again threatened with a plethora. —I am, with the truest sense of gratitude and respect possible, your most humble, most obedient and most obliged servant.

ALTHEA SWARTHMOOR TO DR. MARSTON.

THE HOUSE WITH ELEVEN STAGLACES,

30th July 1709.

Were it not that I had promised to write whene'er I had leisure, I might, perchance, choose rather to loiter about the pleasure with my brother's children, and to sit by the water basins, watching the goldfish, and paddling my fingers. But the strange impatience that has held me of late forces me to take pen in hand, and to write the wild thoughts that flee through my brain. If only the sound of thy voice came, the midday heat would disappear and I should be refreshed as by fountains.

Tell me of Love, not in the few words that almost make me swoon with their power, but in one long, uninterrupted recital. Fear not the censure of other folk (for the speech shall sink secret into my bosom) but drag it out of thy very heart—one drop of blood for each word. Thy miniature lies on my table; alas! my Bible hath grown dusty with neglect. May we not meet to talk of Passion and of Death, and how they oft walk hand in hand together?—Your most loyal and ever devoted

ALTHEA.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

4th August 1709.

A trifle I have written I enclose. One at

dinner chid me for never having loved. The verses were born of fevered heat during a restless night. I have named them 'The Secret Priestess of the Amorous Deities'

Nymphs and Shepherds forthwith sing
To Dan Cupid, Friend and King,
Gambler with our wavering hearts,
Giver both of joys and sorrows:
Hail to Cupid! Hail!

Hail to Venus! Mother Queen,
Who, with eyes of glistening tears,
Sports him on, our souls to cheat,
Laughs and sings at every feat:
Hail to Venus! Hail!

But the Love, which dwelt inside
My heart's core, had lefter died,
Than he praised and sung aloud,
For 'twas secret, wild, and proud.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

September 20th, 1893.

That we should truly admire what you were good enough to praise gives me pure joy. In my girlhood I had dreams of helping another by throwing my whole life into his. Am I really of service to you? Assure me that you did not flatter. Doubting is delicious only when one is certain that the doubts must be resolved. Another walk in the coppice, now that the nights are so sweet and so misty. Another of those

fatal, delicious hour, wherein Love comes at the flood. Dear Maeston, best and noblest of friends, believe me ever to be your devoted and very attached servant.

A MANUSCRIPT OF ALTHEA SWARTSMOOR,
SUGGESTED BY SOME DREAD.

(Written about January 1710.)

There is nothing in the world more sad than a Love that's dying. Profoundest melancholy comes when the gaudily-hued leaves drop from the parent boughs in Autumn, and leave the trunk gaunt, bare, and unlovely. Those trees are beautifullest whose fruit hangs bright and cheering through the Winter, but sleet! they are rare indeed.

How the groaning branches weep when they see their offspring, yellow, crimson, and death-colour, lying beneath them, or carried off, dancing blithely, by every little breeze, to shrivel and decay as Nature demands, on some alien soil! The fairest lineaments of Devotion depart thus from us, and though we grasp a withered tenderness with such a palsied hold as an age-worn oak clutches its leaves, the unwilling thing passes away, floats through the thin air, and leaves us tearful.

We force ourselves to exact those little atten-

tions given by the beloved one, and take an unhealthy gratification in such, believing, or striving to believe, that there is no gold and nought but baser metal in the world. But this cannot last. The Passions of some are destined to die quickly. To warm a corpse on the hearth brings back no life. Bury the dead deeply, water its grave with streaming eyes, and in spring-tide pluck a withered violet or some other sweet-scented blossom from the green sod. Whilst cherishing the token in thy bosom, laugh and be merry in the knowledge that there is no attendant Spirit from the pined creature hovering near.

First desire is ever immature, and worthless in comparison with that which comes in after-life. It is not true that the nature understood to be the largest is capable of the greatest thoughts, for often the most selfish soul is lifted to the highest ecstasy. The strength given by powerful Love is Divine;—the sun warms and ripens Life; Earth is no longer Earth. Existence is a glorious gift.

Love that's true lasts for ever. Death cannot end it. My certain hope, my belief, is that, whether the Afterwards be cast in a wondrous, lovely country or an arid desert, an arm will clasp my waist and feet pace beside mine, whose owner will share all my joy and all my pain.

ALICE SWARTWOOD TO DR. MARSTON.

1st February 1710.

Day after day of wearisome snow! Interminable workings with my needle and discouragements on my sister's spinet! No interview in private to make me forget the staidness of life. When you come here I must needs sit with hands folded, to listen to the mouldy apophthegms my brother repeats, and admire the quiet courtesy wherewith you reply. A woman must think of nought but her still-room, her table, and the fashions. Even so it is they look upon me as a hawk amongst sparrows.

Ah me, to live with a squire who knows nought but Bacon, and knows him, alas! insufficiently; and a lady whose highest inspiration is to work tent-stitch better than her neighbours at Thundercliffe! Lord, how the children are bred! Barbary, who is twenty, sits demure, and fancies she was brought out of a parsley-plot!

Send me those writings of yours, that speak so curiously of happiness. Also those volumes of Sackling and Rochester you mentioned. 'Pigmalion's Image' I read with delight: it is a picture of such vivid, fruit-like loveliness as no modern poet could invent. Almost the reader believes in its truth—for me, my breath came quick and my cheeks grew hot as the Sculptor's

desire was granted. Is there no other poem told in so sweet fashion? Have you not quoted one 'Hero and Leander' by Kit Marlowe; the story of a lover who swam the sea? Pray, if thou canst procure it, do so, for I am enamoured of verse.

To-morrow night we go to the Assembly Ball. I have prepared a surprise for you. Such a gown as you swore would become me most has been devised, and you will see me in light green, with lace of dead-leaf colour. Let not scruples hinder your coming.

Lastly, for I was fain to finish with the taste of this, I am sending you a cravat, wrought by my own hands, of admirable point, of the kind Antonio Moro loved to paint. It has all been done in my chamber, and none knows of it save myself. Honour me by wearing it to-morrow, and understand me, as ever, your loving friend.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

24th June 1710.

Since your removal to Bath, life here has been truly stagnant. I trust the waters are improving the health of madam your wife, to whom pray commend me.

My godmother, Lady Comber, is staying near you. She wrote the other day to bid me come over, but—I cannot. You would be less for me,

I less to you in the midst of a crowd of intellectual and fashionable folk. So I must endure the sweltering summer at home, but truly beg for all possible alleviation of the duress by what letters your kindness may prompt you to send. As you ask, I have writ no more poetry. In a sardonic mood, such as I suffer at present, I am inclined to think all my past work neither rhyme nor reason.

This day I have been over all the walks we affected plucking flowers for our favourite seat, and kissing the lavender tree that grows at the lake-vista. It was a solemn pleasure to revisit these places; a pleasure illumined with the glad certainty that ere long you will be my companion again. Write to me soon, and tell me a thousand things of yourself.

Have you met the great wits? Have you played and won, or—God forbid—lost? What said you in your sermon before the Prince? But ABOVE ALL, HAVE YOU MISSED ME?

Last night I could not sleep. The heat was great, my imagination tortured. Ever and anon I fancied you were near, so rising from my bed at last I sat looking down the terrace, each moment anticipating your approach. By some miracle you were to arrive and to tell me that the strength of my affection had drawn you.

Dawn tore the East to tatters, Phoebus shook himself and leaped out golden. One by one the

birds awake. Yet my dream did not die until Hieronimo (for so I have named the young peacock) shrieked harshly beneath my window. Only then did I understand that you were still at Bath; and with the knowledge of the eighty-score miles of separating hill and plain came the bitterest of tears—those from a lonely woman's eyes.

So, genius and divine, wipe out their remembrance with the tenderest, loveliest letter you ever wrote, and earn the everlasting gratitude of thy Bedswoman.

ALTHEA.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Sep. 1st, 1716.

Since you chide me for my melancholy, dear, good Marston, tell me how I may avoid it. Stay, do not write. Your protracted absence will soon be over—'tis but a week to your return; a week of tedious hours whose passing I shall count one by one, and enjoy them in the same way that we enjoy crab-apples before a frost. The rapture of seeing you again, of hearing your voice, ay, of breathing the same air, must come in one overpowering excess. Because you love me I am crowned amongst women! What glorious, mad words were those ending your last letter: 'There may be no real happiness for us in this sphere, but in the next, what'er betide, all my joy shall be with you.'

O fools that we be, not to dare to pluck the good which lies in our power !

Forgive me now, for I am a coward and need assuring. Art thou sure that after death thou wilt be mine? Nay, I could not live here under suspicion of having yielded to the sweetest temptation. Rest content then, dear heart. There is a particular Paradise for those denied joy on earth. Addie, I have kissed the spot of my signature.

FRAGMENT OF A DIDACTIC SERMON BY THE
ESTIMABLE DR. MARSTON.

Conquer then, I say, conquer the lusts of the flesh ; trample them beneath the feet ; crush them as men crush venomous reptiles. Live loftily and purely, admit no evil thought ; do what good thou canst, and thou shalt inherit God's Kingdom. To the righteous evil desires never come, and the most lovely career is that which like the sun swerves not in its path and sinks to rest amidst the peaks of the country of Beulah. The only perfect man is he whose life is calm and passionless, &c. &c.

ALTHEA SWARTHOOD TO DR. MARSTON.

12th December 1710.

It is harder than I dreamed to live without you, in the now uncertain hope of a meeting after this

world. Yet when you ask me to meet you again in the fir-wood for a long and sweet discourse such as we were wont to have, I cannot but say nay; for my brother's eyes have oft been set upon me lately, and he has questioned me in strange fashion concerning my abstraction and frequent absences. Dearest, I lied to him, and said, with all the blood of my body rushing to my heart, that I was much engaged in meditation and writing. I dare not meet you to-night, but if you rise betimes in the morning I will be in the Long Spinney. Till sunbreak then, yours, ALTHEA.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

10th November 1710.

Let it be now, my lover, let us not wait until age or disease brings us together. To die in the full expectation of joy, without one thought of the gloomy past, with its lurid clouds and too-scorching light—to die in the strongest appreciation, unswerving for man's calumny—is my hope and heart's desire. And even if there be no future but eternal sleep, 'tis eternal sleep at thy side. What more can a tired, loving woman wish for than rest by the man she adores? But there is another country, of that I am assured. So we will brave it together, seize Death at the height of Life, and enter, with unwarped souls, a new existence.

I have been to gaze upon our old trysting places for the last time. Shall we be permitted to visit them when, existing for each other, we pass hand in hand through the air?

At midnight Althea Swarthmoor will be counted amongst the Dead. She calls thee—she bids thee welcome.

Tradition is silent as to the precise manner of the lady's end. Suffice it to say that she died violently at the appointed time. Dr. Marston survived her by forty years; becoming in turn Dean of Barnchester and Bishop of Norbarry. Besides twelve volumes of sermons, he wrote a 'Dissertation on the Human Feelings,' which is still notorious for its triteness.

THE RETURN

FIVE minutes ago I drew the window curtain aside and let the mellow sunset light contend with the glare from the girandoles. Below lay the orchard of Vernon Garth, rich in heavily flowered fruit-trees—yonder a medlar, here a pear, next a quince. As my eyes, unaccustomed to the day, blinked rapidly, the recollection came of a scene forty-five years past, and once more beneath the oldest tree stood the girl I loved, mischievously plucking yarrow, and, despite its evil omen, twining the snowy clusters in her black hair. Again her coquettish words rang in my ears: ‘Make me thy lady! Make me the richest woman in England, and I promise thee, Brian, we shall be the happiest of God’s creatures.’ And I remembered how the mad thirst for gold filled me: how I trusted in her fidelity, and without reasoning or even telling her that I would conquer fortune for her sake, I kissed her sadly and passed into the world. Then followed

a complete silence until the *Star of Europe*, the greatest diamond discovered in modern times, lay in my hand,—a rough unpolished stone not unlike the lumps of spar I had often seen lying on the sandy lanes of my native county. This should be Rose's own, and all the others that clanked so melodiously in their leather bubs should go towards fulfilling her ambition. Rich and happy I should be soon, and should I not marry an untitled gentlewoman, sweet in her prime? The twenty years' interval of work and sleep was like a fading dream, for I was going home. The knowledge thrilled me so that my nerves were strung tight as iron ropes and I laughed like a young boy. And it was all because my home was to be in Rose Pascal's arms.

I crossed the sea and posted straight for Halk-ton village. The old hostelry was crowded. Jane Hopgarth, whom I remembered a ruddy-faced child, stood on the box-edged terrace, courtesying in matronly fashion to the departing mail-coach. A change in the sign-board drew my eye: the white lilies had been painted over with a mitre, and the name changed from the Pascal Arms to the Lord Bishop. Angrily against at this disloyalty, I cross-questioned the ostlers, who hurried to and fro, but failing to obtain any coherent reply I was fain to content myself with a mental denunciation of the times.

At last I saw Bow-Legged Jeffries, now bent double with age, sunning himself at his favourite place, the side of the horse-trough. As of old he was chewing a straw. No sign of recognition came over his face as he gazed at me, and I was shocked, because I wished to impart some of my gladness to a fellow-creature. I went to him, and after trying in vain to make him speak, held forth a gold coin. He rose instantly, grasped it with palsied fingers, and, muttering that the hounds were starting, hurried from my presence. Feeling half-sad I crossed to the churchyard and gazed through the grated window of the Pascal burial chapel at the recumbent and undisturbed effigies of Geoffrey Pascal, gentleman, of Botton Hall; and Margot Maltrevor his wife, with their quaint epitaph about a perfect marriage enduring for ever. Then, after noting the rankness of the docks and nettles, I crossed the worn stile and with footsteps surprising fleet passed towards the stretch of moorland at whose further end stands Botton Hall.

Twilight had fallen ere I reached the cottage at the entrance of the park. This was in a ruinous condition: here and there shingles in the thatched roof had parted and formed crevices through which smoke filtered. Some of the tiny windows had been walled up, and even where the glass remained snake-like ivy hindered any light from falling into their thick recesses.

The door stood open, although the evening was chill. As I approached, the heavy autumnal dew shook down from the eaves and fell upon my shoulders. A bat, swooping in an undulation, struck between my eyes and fell to the grass, moaning querulously. I entered. A withered woman sat beside the peat fire. She held a pair of steel knitting-needles which she moved without cessation. There was no thread upon them, and when they clicked her lips twitched as if she had counted. Some time passed before I recognised Rose's foster-mother, Elizabeth Carless. The ruset colour of her cheeks had faded and left a sickly grey: those sunken, dimmed eyes were utterly unlike the bright black orbs that had danced so mirthfully. Her stature, too, had shrunk. I was struck with wonder. Elizabeth could not be more than fifty-six years old. I had been away twenty years; Rose was fifteen when I left her, and I had heard Elizabeth say that she was only twenty-one at the time of her darling's weaning. But what a change! She had such an air of weary grief that my heart grew sick.

Advancing to her side I touched her arm. She turned, but neither spoke nor seemed aware of my presence. Soon, however, she rose, and helping herself along by grasping the scanty furniture, tottered to a window and peered out. Her right hand crept to her throat; she untied the string

of her gown and took from her bosom a pomander set in a battered silver case. I cried out; Rose had loved that toy in her childhood; thousands of times had we played ball with it. . . . Elizabeth held it to her mouth and mumbled it, as if it were a baby's hand. Maddened with impatience, I caught her shoulder and roughly bade her say where I should find Rose. But something awoke in her eyes, and she shrank away to the other side of the house-place: I followed; she covered on the floor, looking at me with a strange horror. Her lips began to move, but they made no sound. Only when I crossed to the threshold did she rise; and then her head moved wildly from side to side, and her hands pressed close to her breast, as if the pain there were too great to endure.

I ran from the place, not daring to look back. In a few minutes I reached the balustraded wall of the Hall garden. The vegetation there was wonderfully luxuriant. As of old, the great blue and white Canterbury bells grew thickly, and these curious flowers to which tradition has given the name of 'Marie's Heart' still spread their creamy tendrils and blood-coloured bloom on every hand. But 'Peace's Delight,' the tiny spring whose water pulsed so fiercely as it emerged from the earth, had long since burst its bounds, and converted the winter garden into a swamp, where

a miniature forest of queen-of-the-meadow filled the air with melancholy sweetness. The house looked as if no careful hand had touched it for years. The elements had played havoc with its crick, and many of the latticed frames hung on single hinges. The curtains of the blue parlour hung outside, druggled and faded, and half hidden by a thick growth of hindweed.

With an almost savage force I raised my arm high above my head and brought my fist down upon the central panel of the door. There was no need for such violence, for the decayed-fastenings made no resistance, and some of the rotten boards fell to the ground. As I entered the hall and saw the ancient furniture, once so fondly kept, now mildewed and crumbling to dust, quick sobs burst from my throat. Rose's spinet stood beside the door of the withdrawing-room. How many carols had we sung to its music! As I passed my foot struck one of the legs and the rickety structure groaned as if it were coming to pieces. I thrust out my hand to steady it, but at my touch the velvet covering of the lid came off and the tiny gilt ornaments rattled downwards. The moon was just rising and only half her disc was visible over the distant edge of the Hell Garden. The light in the room was very uncertain, yet I could see that the keys of the instrument were stained brown, and bound together with thick cobwebs.

Whilst I stood beside it I felt an overpowering desire to play a country ballad with an over-word of 'Willow' broxbound.' The words in strict accordance with the melody are merry and sad by turns: at one time filled with light happiness, at another bitter as the voice of one bereaved for ever of joy. So I cleared off the spiders and began to strike the keys with my forefinger. Many were dumb, and when I struck them gave forth no sound save a peculiar sigh; but still the melody rhythmised as distinctly as if a low voice crooned it out of the darkness. Wearied with the bitterness, I turned away.

By now the full moonlight pierced the window and quivered on the floor. As I gazed on the tremulous pattern it changed into quaint devices of hoes, daggers, rings, and a thousand tokens more. All suddenly another object glided amongst them so quickly that I wondered whether my eyes had been at fault,—a tiny satin shoe, stained crimson across the lappets. A revulsion of feeling came to my soul and drove away all my fear. I had seen that selfsame shoe white and unsoiled twenty years before, when vain, vain Rose danced amongst her reapers at the harvest-home. And my voice cried out in ecstasy, 'Rose, heart of mine! Delight of all the world's delights!'

She stood before me, wondering, amazed. Alas,

so changed ! The red-and-yellow silk shawl still covered her shoulders ; her hair still hung in those cliritch curls. But the beautiful face had grown wan and tired, and across the forehead lines were drawn like silver threads. She threw her arms round my neck and, pressing her bosom heavily on mine, sobbed so piteously that I grew afraid for her, and drew back the long masses of hair which had fallen forward, and kissed again and again those lips that were too lovely for simile. Never came a word of chiding from them. ' Love,' she said, when she had regained her breath, ' the past struggle was sharp and torturing—the future struggle will be crueler still. What a great love yours was, to wait and trust for so long ! Would that mine had been as powerful ! Poor, weak heart that could not endure !'

The tones of a wild fear throbbed through all her speech, strongly, yet with insufficient power to prevent her feeling the tenderness of those moments. Often, timorously raising her head from my shoulder, she looked about and then turned with a soft, inarticulate, and glad murmur to hide her face on my bosom. I spoke fervently ; told of the years spent away from her ; how, when working in the diamond-fields she had ever been present in my fancy ; how at night her name had fallen from my lips in my only prayer ; how I had dreamed of her amongst the greatest

in the land,—the richest, and, I dare swear, the loveliest woman in the world. I grew warmer still: all the gladness which had been constrained for so long now burst wildly from my lips: a myriad of rich ideas resolved into words, which, being spoken, wove one long and delicious fit of passion. As we stood together, the moon brightened and filled the chamber with a light like the day's. The ridges of the surrounding moorland stood out in sharp relief.

Rose drank in my declarations thirstily, but soon interrupted me with a heavy sigh. 'Come away,' she said softly. 'I no longer live in this house. You must stay with me to-night. This place is so wretched now; for time, that in you and me has only strengthened love, has wrought much ruin here.'

Half leaning on me, she led me from the precincts of Berton Hall. We walked in silence over the waste that crowns the valley of the Whitelands and, being near the verge of the rocks, saw the great pinewood sloping downwards, lighted near us by the moon, but soon lost in density. Along the mysterious line where the light changed into gloom, intricate shadows of withered summer beeches struck and receded in a mimic battle. Before us lay the Priests' Cliff. The moon was veiled by a grove of elms, whose ever-swaying branches alternately increased and lessened

her brightness. This was a place of notoriety—a veritable Golgotha—a haunt fit only for demons. Murder and theft had been punished here; and to this day fireside stories are told of evil women dancing round that Druids' circle, carrying hearts plucked from gibbeted bodies.

'Rose,' I whispered, 'why have you brought me here?'

She made no reply, but pressed her head more closely to my shoulder. Scarcely had my lips closed ere a sound like the hiss of a half-strangled snake vibrated amongst the trees. It grew louder and louder. A monstrous shadow hovered above.

Rose from my bosom murmured. 'Love is strong as Death! Love is strong as Death!'

I locked her in my arms, so tightly that she grew breathless. 'Hold me,' she panted. 'You are strong.'

A cold hand touched our foreheads so that, benumbed, we sank together to the ground, to fall instantly into a dreamless slumber.

When I awoke the clear grey light of the early morning had spread over the country. Beyond the Hell Garden the sun was just bursting through the clouds, and had already spread a long golden haze along the horizon. The babbling of the streamlet that runs down to Halkton was so distinct that it seemed almost at my side. How

sweetly the wild thyme smelt ! Filled with the tender recollections of the night, without turning, I called Rose Pascal from her sleep.

‘Sweetheart, sweetheart, waken ! waken ! waken ! See how glad the world looks—see the omens of a happy future.’

No answer came. I sat up, and looking round me saw that I was alone. A square stone lay near. When the sun was high I crept to read the inscription carved thereon :—‘*Here, at four cross-paths, lieth, with a stake through the bosom, the body of Rose Pascal, who in her sixteenth year wilfully cast away the life God gave.*’

THE BASILISK



MARINA gave no sign that she heard my protestation. The embroidery of Venus's hands in her silk picture of *The Judgment of Paris* was seemingly of greater import to her than the love which almost tore my soul and body sunder. In absolute despair I sat until she had replenished her needle seven times. Then impassioned nature cried aloud :—

' You do not love me ! '

She looked up somewhat wearily, as one debarr'd from rest. ' Listen,' she said. ' There is a creature called a Basilisk, which turns men and women into stone. In my girlhood I saw the Basilisk—I am stone ! '

And, rising from her chair, she departed the room, leaving me in amazed doubt as to whether I had heard aright. I had always known of some curious secret in her life : a secret which permitted her to speak of and to understand

things to which no other woman had dared to lift her thoughts. But alas! it was a secret whose influence ever thrust her back from the attaining of happiness. She would warm, then freeze instantly; discuss the purest wisdom, then cease with contemptuous lips and eyes. Doubtless this strangeness had been the first thing to awaken my passion. Her beauty was not of the kind that smites men with sudden craving; it was pale and reposeful, the loveliness of a marble image. Yet, as time went on, so wondrous became her fascination that even the murmur of her swaying garments sickened me with longing. Not more than a year had passed since our first meeting, when I had found her laden with flaming tendrils in the thinned woods of my heritage. A very Dryad, robed in grass colour, she was chanting to the sylvan deities. The invisible web took me, and I became her slave.

Her house lay two leagues from mine. It was a low-built mansion lying in a concave park. The thatch was gaudy with stonecrop and lichen. Amongst the central chimneys a foreign bird sat on a nest of twigs. The long windows blazed with heraldic devices; and paintings of kings and queens and nobles hung in the dim chambers. Here she dwelt with a retinue of aged servants, fantastic women and men half imbecile, who salaamed before her with eastern humility and

yet addressed her in such terms as gossips use. Had she given them life they could not have obeyed with more reverence. Quaint things the women wrought for her—pomanders and cushions of thistle-down; and the men were never happier than when they could tell her of the first thrush's egg in the thornhush or the song of bitterns that haunted the marsh. She was their goddess and their daughter. Each day had its own routine. In the morning she rode and sang and played; at noon she read in the dusty library, drinking to the full of the dramatists and the platonists. Her own life was such a tragedy as an Elizabethan would have adored. None save her people knew her history, but there were wonderful stories of how she had bowed to tradition, and concentrated in herself the characteristics of a thousand wizard fathers. In the blossom of her youth she had sought strange knowledge, and had tasted thereof, and rued.

The morning after my declaration she rode across her park to the meditating walk I always paced till noon. She was alone, dressed in a habit of white lutestring with a loose girdle of blue. As her mare reached the yew hedge, she dismounted, and came to me with more lightness than I had ever beheld in her. At her waist hung a black glass mirror, and her half-bare arms were adorned with cabalistic jewels.

When I knelt to kiss her hand, she sighed heavily. 'Ask me nothing,' she said. 'Life itself is too joyless to be more embittered by explanations. Let all rest between us as now. I will love coldly, you warmly, with no nearer approaching.' Her voice rung full of a wistful expectancy: as if she knew that I should combat her half-explained decision. She read me well, for almost ere she had done I cried out loudly against it:—'It can never be so—I cannot breathe—I shall die?'

She sank to the low moss-covered wall. 'Must the sacrifice be made?' she asked, half to herself. 'Must I tell him all?' Silence prevailed a while, then turning away her face she said: 'From the first I loved you, but last night in the darkness, when I could not sleep for thinking of your words, love sprang into desire.'

I was forbidden to speak.

'And desire seemed to burst the cords that bound me. In that moment's strength I felt that I could give all for the joy of being once utterly yours.'

I longed to clasp her to my heart. But her eyes were stern, and a frown crossed her brow.

'At morning light,' she said, 'desire died, but in my ecstasy I had sworn to give what must be given for that short bliss, and to lie in your arms and pant against you before another midnight.'

So I have come to bid you fare with me to the place where the spell may be loosed, and happiness bought.'

She called the mare: it came whinnying, and pawed the ground until she had stroked its neck. She mounted, setting in my hand a tiny, satin-shod foot that seemed rather child's than woman's. 'Let us go together to my house,' she said. 'I have orders to give and duties to fulfil. I will not keep you there long, for we must start soon on our errand.' I walked exultantly at her side, but, the grange in view, I entreated her to speak explicitly of our mysterious journey. She stooped and patted my head. 'Tis but a matter of buying and selling,' she answered.

When she had arranged her household affairs, she came to the library and bade me follow her. Then, with the mirror still swinging against her knees, she led me through the garden and the wilderness down to a misty wood. It being autumn, the trees were tinted gloriously in dusky bars of colouring. The rowan, with his amber leaves and scarlet berries, stood before the brown black-spotted sycamore; the silver birch flaunted his golden coins against my poverty; firs, green and fern-hued, slumbered in hazy gossamer. No bird carolled, although the sun was hot. Marina noted the absence of sound, and without prelude of any kind began to sing from the ballad of the

Witch Mother: about the nine enchanted knots, and the trouble-comb in the lady's knotted hair, and the master-kid that ran beneath her couch. Every drop of my blood froze in dread, for whilst she sang her face took on the majesty of one who traffics with infernal powers. As the shade of the trees fell over her, and we passed intermittently out of the light, I saw that her eyes glittered like rings of sapphires. Believing now that the ordeal she must undergo would be too frightful, I begged her to return. Supplicating on my knees—'Let me face the evil alone!' I said, 'I will entreat the loosening of the bands. I will compel and accept any penalty.' She grew calm. 'Nay,' she said, very gently, 'if aught can conquer, it is my love alone. In the fervour of my last wish I can dare everything.'

By now, at the end of a sloping alley, we had reached the shores of a vast marsh. Some unknown quality in the sparkling water had stained its whole bed a bright yellow. Green leaves, of such a sour brightness as almost poisoned to behold, floated on the surface of the rush-girdled pools. Woods like tempting veils of mossy velvet grew beneath in vivid contrast with the soil. Alders and willows hung over the margin. From where we stood a half-submerged path of rough stones, threaded by deep swift channels, crossed to the very centre. Marina put her foot upon the

first step. 'I must go first,' she said. 'Only once before have I gone this way, yet I know its pitfalls better than any living creature.'

Before I could hinder her she was leaping from stone to stone like a hunted animal. I followed hastily, seeking, but vainly, to lessen the space between us. She was gasping for breath, and her heart-beats sounded like the ticking of a clock. When we reached a great pool, itself almost a lake, that was covered with lavender scum, the path turned abruptly to the right, where stood an isolated grove of wasted elms. As Marina beheld this, her pace slackened, and she paused in momentary indecision; but, at my first word of pleading that she should go no further, she went on, dragging her silken mud-bespattered skirts. We climbed the slippery shores of the island (for island it was, being raised much above the level of the marsh), and Marina led the way over lush grass to an open glade. A great marble tank lay there, supported on two thick pillars. Decayed boughs rested on the crest of stagnancy within, and divers frogs, bloated and almost blue, rolled off at our approach. To the left stood the columns of a temple, a round, domed building, with a closed door of bronze. Wild vines had grown athwart the portal; rank, clinging herbs had sprung from the overturning soil; astrological figures were cackled on the broad stairs.

Here Marina stopped. 'I shall blindfold you,' she said, taking off her loose sash, 'and you must vow obedience to all I tell you. The least error will betray us.' I promised, and submitted to the bandage. With a pressure of the hand, and bidding me neither move nor speak, she left me and went to the door of the temple. Thrice her hand struck the dull metal. At the last stroke a hissing shriek came from within, and the massive hinges creaked loudly. A breath like an icy tongue leaped out and touched me, and in the terror my hand sprang to the kerchief. Marina's voice, filled with agony, gave me instant pause. '*Oh, why am I thus torn between the man and the fiend? The mask that holds life in will be ripped from end to end! Is there no mercy?*'

My hand fell impotent. Every muscle shrank. I felt myself turn to stone. After a while came a sweet scent of smouldering wood: such an Oriental fragrance as is offered to Indian gods. Then the door swung to, and I heard Marian's voice, dim and wordless, but raised in wild deprecation. Hour after hour passed so, and still I waited. Not until the sash grew crimson with the rays of the sinking sun did the door open.

'Come to me!' Marina whispered. 'Do not unblindfold. Quick—we must not stay here long. He is glutted with my sacrifice.'

Newborn joy rang in her tones. I stumbled

across and was caught in her arms. Shafts of delight pierced my heart at the first contact with her warm breasts. She turned me round, and bidding me look straight in front, with one swift touch untied the knot. The first thing my dazed eyes fell upon was the mirror of black glass which had hung from her waist. She held it so that I might gaze into its depths. And there, with a cry of amazement and fear, *I saw the shadow of the Basilisk.*

The Thing was lying prone on the floor, the presentment of a sleeping horror. Vivid scarlet and sable feathers covered its gold-crowned cock's-head, and its leathern dragon-wings were folded. Its sinuous tail, capped with a snake's eyes and mouth, was curved in luxurious and delighted satiety. A prodigious evil leaped in its atmosphere. But even as I looked a mist crowded over the surface of the mirror: the shadow faded, leaving only an indistinct and wavering shape. Marina breathed upon it, and, as I peered and pored, the gloom went off the plate and left, where the Chimera had lain, the prostrate figure of a man. He was young and stalwart, a dark outline with a white face, and short black curls that fell in tangles over a shapely forehead, and eyelids languorous and red. His aspect was that of a wearied demon-god.

When Marina looked sideways and saw my wonderment, she laughed delightedly in one rip-

pling running tune that should have quickened the dead entrails of the marsh. 'I have conquered!' she cried. 'I have purchased the fulness of joy!' And with one outstretched arm she closed the door before I could turn to look; with the other she encircled my neck, and, bringing down my head, pressed my mouth to hers. The mirror fell from her hand, and with her foot she crushed its shards into the dank mould.

The sun had sunk behind the trees now, and glittered through the intricate leafage like a charcoal-burner's fire. All the nymphs of the pools arose and danced, grey and cold, exulting at the absence of the divine light. So thickly gathered the vapours that the path grew perilous. 'Stay, love,' I said. 'Let me take you in my arms and carry you. It is no longer safe for you to walk alone.' She made no reply, but, a flush arising to her pale cheeks, she stood and let me lift her to my bosom. She rested a hand on either shoulder, and gave no sign of fear as I bounded from stone to stone. The way lengthened deliciously, and by the time we reached the plantation the moon was rising over the farther hills. Hope and fear fought in my heart: soon both were set at rest. When I set her on the dry ground she stood a-tiptoe, and murmured with exquisite shame: 'To-night, then, dearest. My home is yours now.'

So, in a rapture too subtle for words, we walked together, arm-enfolded, to her house. Preparations for a banquet were going on within: the windows were ablaze, and figures passed behind them bowed with heavy dishes. At the threshold of the hall we were met by a triumphant crash of melody. In the musician's gallery bald-pated veterans stood to it with flute and harp and viol-de-gamba. In two long rows the antic retainers stood, and bowed, and cried merrily: 'Joy and health to the bride and groom!' And they kissed Marina's hands and mine, and, with the players sending forth that half-forgotten tenderness which threads through ancient song-books, we passed to the feast, seating ourselves on the dais, whilst the servants filled the tables below. But we made little feint of appetite. As the last dish of confections was removing, a weird pagesant swept across the further end of the banqueting-room: Oberon and Titania with Robin Goodfellow and the rest, attired in silks and satins gorgeous of hue, and bedizened with such late flowers as were still with us. I leaned forward to commend, and saw that each face was brown and wizened and thin-haired: so that their motions and their epithetary felt goblin and discomfiting; nor could I smile till they departed by the further door. Then the tables were cleared away, and Marina, taking my finger-tips in hers, opened

a stately dance. The servants followed, and in the second maze a shrill and joyful laughter proclaimed that the bride had sought her chamber. . . .

Ere the dawn I wakened from a troubled sleep, My dream had been of despair: I had been persecuted by a host of devils, thieves of a priceless jewel. So I leaned over the pillow for Marina's consolation; my lips sought hers, my hand crept beneath her head. My heart gave one mad bound—then stopped.

DAME INOWSLAD



YCAMORES and beeches surrounded the inn; elders, still green-flowered, leaned over the grass-grown roads. The belt of sward was white with lady-smocks, but in the damp hollows marsh-marigolds radiated essential sunlight. The blackbirds sang, and loudly, yet without the true strain of mirth: sang like blackbirds that must sing, but of rifled nests. Even the grasshoppers had some trouble: never had they chirped so pathetically before.

On the green the gilded figure of a bull hung from two uprights; it swung from side to side in the light breeze. The copper bell on a twisted pole hard by was green with mould: a-swing from it was a rusty chain; it had been used in the old posting days, and many a yeoman had haled himself into his saddle from the worn mounting-block beside it.

For the inn itself, it was vast and rambling, dwarfed by the towering trees. For miles in

every direction lay the old forest of Gardomwood, a relic of primeval woodland, rich in glades and brakes, in streamlets and mires: hazy in the clearings, where sheer-legs, like the trivets of witches' caldrons, and tents and blue-smoking heaps told of charcoal-burners and their ever-shifting trade.

The Golden Bull with its beautiful precincts took me back to that fading Arcady whose shepherdesses and swains felt the end of the joy-time coming. It was utterly sad; but I was caught in the meshes of its melancholy, and for the while could not escape. Twilight fell, and I ceased from exploring, and went indoors. In the parlour was a great square piano. Its music, while acidly discordant, was yet plaintive with the curious speech such old things often own. I played a few Robin Hood ballads—of the Outlaw and Little John, of the Bishop of Hereford and Robin's pleasing escape. Then the hostess entered with a great Nottingham jar full of white lilac. She set this down between the firelogs, and stood leaning one hand on a chair-back and listening to the music. When I stopped she sighed heavily: I left the piano, and offered her a chair. She was middle-aged and deformed; her shoulders were humped, her face was shrivelled, but she had large grey eyes and a wistful smile.

'I thank you, sir,' she said. 'Twas the music drew me in. Nobody's played since last summer, when Sir Jake Inowslad stayed here. His taste was sonatas and fugues—things pretty enough, but only pleasing at the time. Give me a melody that I can catch—almost grasp in my hand so to speak.'

'Do you play?' I asked, half-hoping to hear some air she had loved in her youth.

'No, I cannot play. I was still-room maid at Melbrook Abbey, so I never had opportunity.'

As she spoke, a girl came in with the snuff-tray and candles. She was pale and tall and of a tempting shape. Beautiful she was not, yet the sad strangeness of her face impressed me more than great beauty would have done. Her eyes were like the other woman's, but clearer and more expressive; her lips were quaintly arched; long yellow hair hung down her back. She seemed, although she walked erect, to be recovering from some violent illness. When she had gone the hostess spoke again. 'My niece is not strong,' she said, laying an unnecessary emphasis on the word *niece*. 'The air does not suit her.'

'Was not she bred in the country?' I inquired.

'Ah, no! She is not without money—her father endowed her well. Until two years back she was at the convent of the Sisters of Saint

Vincent de Paul for her education. 'Tis in the hill-country, and I think that coming to the flatness of Gardomwood has done her harm.'

The girl came in again: this time I noted her grace of movement; it had something of the wearied goddess. 'Aunt,' she said quietly, 'I wish to go into the woods—you can spare me? All I had to do is done; the women are sewing in the kitchen.' She went to the further end of the room, where a cloak of rose-coloured silk hung, ermine-lined, from a nail in the panelling. She douned it at her leisure; her long and narrow hands were of a perfect colour. She tied the broad ribands of the collar; she lighted two candles that hung before a tarnished mirror, and gazed at her shadow; then, her lips moving silently, she left the room.

'Ever the same,' the elder woman said. 'Night after night does she leave the house and travel about like an aimless thing. Come back, Dinah,' she called, 'come back.' But the thin voice went wavering through the empty passages unanswered. So the hostess rose and with a half-apologetic 'Good-night,' left me alone. I sat down in the deep recess of the window behind a heavy curtain. A copy of Denis Diderot's *Refrégiance* lay on the little table. I took it up, and was soon engrossed in it: for of all books this is the most fascinating, the most disappointing, the

most grim. A light came glimmering at the end of the vista before me: it grew and grew, and the moon uplifted herself waist-high above the trees. And when I had watched her thus far, I returned to my pen and reached page twenty-two of the second volume, where I read the following sentence: 'After a few flourishes she played some things, foolish, wild, and incoherent as her own ideas, but through all the defects of her execution I saw she had a touch infinitely superior to mine.' Then in the shaded window-seat I fell asleep. . . .

The striking of a tall clock near the hearth awakened me: I had slept till midnight. The candles had been removed from the table to the piano; those in the girandole had guttered out or been extinguished. A young man sat at the piano on the embroidered stool. His back was towards me; I saw nothing but high, narrow shoulders and a dome-shaped head of dishevelled black hair plentifully besprinkled with grey. From the road outside came a noise of horses whinnying and plunging. I looked out, and there was a lumbering coach drawn by four stallions which, black in daylight, shone now like burnished steel.

The would-be musician turned and showed me a long painful face with glistening eyes and a brow ridged upward like a rained stair. It was

a face of intense eagerness: the eagerness of a man experimenting and praying for a result whereon his life depends. Without any prelude he played a dance of ghosts in an old ball-room: ghosts of men and women that moved in lavoltas and sarabands; ghosts that laughed at Susanna in the tapestry; ghosts that loved and hated. When the last chord had sent them crowding to their graves he turned and listened for a foot-step. None came. He lifted a leather case from the side of the stool and, unfastening its clasp, took out a necklace which glistened in the candle-light like a fairy shower of rain and snow. 'Twas of table diamonds and margarites, the gems as big as filberts. He spread it across the wires, and after an instant's reflection began to play. The caruncet rattled and jangled as he went: it was as an advancing host of cymbal-women. When he listened again, great tears oozed from his eyes. He took up the jewel and played a melody rapid at first, but so subtle in its repetitions that none might doubt its meaning: thus and not otherwise would sound a lyke-wake sung in a worn voice after a night of singing. And whilst he played, the door opened silently, and I saw Dinah, there in her nightgown, holding the posts with her hands. She took one swift glance, then disappeared again in the darkness, and came back carrying in her arms a bundle swathed in pure

linen and strongly odorous of aromatic herbs. Holding this to her breast, she approached the man. Her shadow fell across the keys, and he lifted his head. From both came a long murmur: his of love and joy and protection, hers of agony. He rose and would have clasped her, but she drew back and placed her burden in his outstretched hands.

'It is the child,' she said. 'Three months ago I gave birth to her, none knew save myself. . . . She was all that remained of you: all that I had, and I dared not part with her. . . . But now—now that I have seen you again—take her away—leave me—leave me in peace.'

'Dinah,' he said proudly, 'listen to me.'

'Nay,' she whispered, 'not again. If I listen I may forget your wickedness; I might be weak again. Leave me, Jake.'

'Dinah, you must hear me. Why, out of all the love you held and hold for me, can you condemn? When I left you I fell mad; for the year I have been mad, and only yesterday did they set me loose. See, I have brought you all the diamonds; to-morrow you will be Dame Inowslad.' And he laid the dead thing on a table, and caught the mother to his bosom. Her figure was shaken with sobs.

'Oh,' she cried, 'it has been hard; but my trial has brought the true garden of happiness.

Only once have I missed seeing the place where you promised to meet me—the place where you said you loved me; and that was on the night of my lonely travelling.’

Outside the horses plunged and snorted: a shrunken postillion swaying at the neck of the off-leader. In the hollows of the road lay sheets of mist, and the moonlight turned them into floods. A long train of startled owls left the hollow sycamores and passed hooting . . . hooting . . . down the glade.

‘Let us go,’ Sir Jake said; ‘by morning light we shall be in sight of Cammere, where Heaven grant us a happy time;—a year of joy for each week of pain. Do not wait to dress; rich robes and linen are inside the coach; I have brought many of my mother’s gowns.’

Dinah extricated herself from his embrace, and went to find her cloak. During her absence a strange and terrible look came into Inowslad’s face and he smote his forehead. He smiled at her re-appearing. ‘Dinah,’ he said, looking downwards, so that she might not see his eyes, ‘Dinah, I am so happy that I can scarce see. Lead me from the house.’

He took up the dead little one in his right arm, and carried it as believers carry relics. The outer door closed softly; they descended the moss-grown steps, and entered the coach. The

horses leaped forward, half drowning the sound of a chuckle. A glint of the moon pierced the coach windows, and I saw a brown hand, convulsed and violent, gripping a long white throat.

EXCERPTS FROM WITHER- TON'S JOURNAL: ALSO A LETTER OF CRYSTALLA'S



HE principal events of Pliny Wither-ton's life are written at length in Goodwin's *Records of English Painters*, a volume published by Dodsley in 1758. He is described therein as one whose genius went beyond his achievement; who suffered ecstatic pain in conception, yet brought forth little worthy of remembrance.

Personally he was small and ill-formed: of that sallow countenance and red skin-like hair wherewith tradition has gifted Judas Iscariot. His gait was felinely nimble, his voice harsh. Notwithstanding his great defects, he was a favourite with women.

He died at his zenith. His celebrity was ephemeral; for, possessed of a curious medium, the secret of whose preparation he refused to

share with any contemporary, he used it with such fatal effect that his works, which were strangely rich at first, became almost colourless after the lapse of a few decades. The only picture still existent is at Hambleton; where is also preserved the journal whence the following extracts are taken. It is a 'Boudicca,' faded to a sober brown.

Jan. 12, 1700.—This morning my uncle chose the story of Jacob wrestling with the Angel. I know not how I bore his tedious droning. He pictured the dullest scene, put into their mouths the dullest words. And there came something that thrust a hand through my breast and caught about my heart, and forced tears down my cheeks. Oh to have shown them what I beheld!

Little Anne saw me through the broken panel of the Earl's pew, and put her fingers to my knee to feel the thrilling. But I thrust them away, for the child is a bastard and as ugly as a toad—yet not so ugly neither, but foreign (her mother came of the Rouvigny's) and pale and quiet. She is downtrodden by madam the Countess. May be I was hard upon her.

The lass blenched, for had she not but yesterday slyly given me her father's present—a golden guinea—to buy colours for my work? What if she give me no more! Alack! So after the *Anon* was mumbled I stole with her to the pools amongst

the groove-hillocks, and showed her rash-tips covered with hoar above the ice. As we stood she put her arm about my neck and said : 'We are both lonely, none loves us.' And I felt angry again and struck her face. 'I am not lonely, I shall be famous,' I cried ; 'but you, Mistress Craven-spirit, are fit for naught but nursing madam's hrets.'

May 1, 1708.—Too terrible Fortune, imprisoning me in an iron cage ; from between whose bars I see thy wheel turning, turning, turning ! To-day is my twentieth birthday, and I have done no work for all these years. Creations enow have stirred my brain. I see heroes in jewelled harness ; ruddy-hued and beautiful dames. They play their parts, yet when I take the crayon, 'tis to depict a crowd of malkins. God, never was being so ill-fated !

Anne brought me a purse woven of her own coarse hair ; it held eight crowns and a poy-ring. Yesterday I had threatened to leave this accursed house and never send word. She hath now sold all her trinkets. The office of secretary to such a dotard as the Earl I loathe ; and the continual buzzing of my hammer-bee-uncle frets my very soul.

I walked with Anne on Danman's Moor, and the strong wind blew a colour into her hollow cheeks. Moreover, her eyes looked very big and

lustrous. But she wore such a faded gown as any village alewife would have scorned; and the looseness made her shoulders seem hunched. Withal on her lips was such a smile as I shall give Christ's Mother in my masterpiece. As I gazed the rosiness deepened, and she murmured in a voice half-moan, 'Is there aught worthy there?' So, being malicious of humour, I praised that smile, and saw her bosom rise and fall like a wild beast's panting apart from the hunters.

Jan. 9, 1704.—At last I have left Hambleton. There was no money there, and my lord strove to repress my ambition with his eternal 'Thy uncle on his death-bed wished it so. For, leaving thee not a penny, he commended thee to my care. The chaplainship shall be thine, an' I need no secretary-work save what thou canst do at odd times. Alas! nine daughters have I to dower!' And Anne had given me all, so I rolled my pictures in a bundle and am come to seek the patronage of our great men, who, as I have learnt, are ever ready to help on struggling Wits.

July 27, 1704.—O Heaven, that this world should be so cruel! Flouted in rich fool's ante-chambers; turned roughly from door after door! Shame devours me to-day; for though poverty no longer pricks me I have sold my honour. Twenty golden pieces earned with bloody sweat lie on the table. The signs were delivered scarce two hours

since. The first I wrought had some solace, for the Angel was a careful presentment of Lucy, as sweet a maid as England holds. But twelve years old, and yet with the wit and loveliness of Shesha's queen, how she shrivels her base-born half-sister! A hundred times since I came to this town has her proud excellence disquieted my chambers. The beauty that daunts a man's the beauty for me.

Accursed be this vile place where art and genius crouch together in the alleys!

Sept. 30, 1704.—The last page I may write in this poor journal shall contain naught of anger. Once I read that he conquers who strives with circumstance. No greater fallacy was ever writ. The last coin is spent; utter ruin in store. The certainty of my gift hinders me from pondering again to the vulgar. Life and I nearly parted at the great humiliation. Those terrible pictures, to whose doing desperation forced me, haunt me like ghosts. I dared not pace the streets lest I should see my handiwork swinging over the canopy. It is better for me to die.

To Anne I bequeath all good and tender wishes, for she alone would aid me in my early strugglings. In this my last hour I fully acknowledge her kindness. . . .

Oct. 1, 1704.—Dolt that I was to lose courage! At last the goddess hath smoothed her frown.

When I rose at the sound of knocking 'twas to find a cloaked and hooded woman at my door. The domino fell open and discovered Anne's face, haggard and stained with tears. In her hands she carried a heavy bag. 'My Aunt Rouvigny is dead,' she cried, 'and since she might leave me naught by will this she gave me in private. None knows of it save myself. It is yours—all lies before you now. Take the road to Fame.' And though we had not met for so long, she waited for no word.

Dear heart, to resign that fortune for my sake ! When I have seen all that Europe boasts, and studied the works of the dark masters, I will return and make her my wife. Here is a copy of what I writ to her at Hambleton :—

'Mistress, I entreat you would be pleased to receive my very great thanks for the largeness of your generosity. I have warmer dreams of my work than ever, and with travel and the instruction of Italian artists I hope to do wondrous pictures. You have been my staff, and when the day comes that I already foresee, I shall cast myself a willing slave at your feet.—I am your humble Servant,

PLODY WITHERTON.'

* * * *

[The journal contains an accurate narrative of adventures on the Continent. Anne's gift was a thousand guineas. The relation of Witherton's

amours in France and Italy is worthy of Smollett. Anne's constancy is noted at intervals. Her father and the tyrannical Countess had died, and left her guardian of their nine children, and she spent the years at Hambleton fostering the estate.

Witherton suffered anguish before the Titians at Venice, and swooned in the Sistine Chapel, English art being what it was, his work won him some notice in Rome. Success strengthened his imagination, and his creations became more virile.

At the Russian Court, whither he travelled from Italy, he was made painter-in-chief, and found his emoluments so large, and his position so vastly improved, that at the end of the fifth year he returned to England, with the intention of fulfilling his promise to Anne.]

* * * *

Jan. 1, 1710.—'Tis no longer the Hambleton of my boyhood; 'tis a centre of wretchedness and parsimony! Then all was lavishness—open house—the whole world welcome. Even whilst the leather hung rotting from the walls, came tuns of wine and rare fruits for each season. Now a new order ruleth;—to the deuce with such cheeseparing! 'Mistress orders the fish from our own ponds; mistress orders the goroocks to be killed on Danman's Moor.' The meanness of habit that sickened me in earlier times has now reached head.

And yesternight I made her understand. In the days before the cognoscenti acknowledged my genius, we had been wont to watch the New Year in from the windows of the Grecian temple that lies a quoit's-cast from the hill-walk.

When we had supped together she rose from the table, and courted with an old maid's awkwardness.

'You play hoodman-blind when I am by,' she said. 'Do you not see my gown? From Firenze you wrote that purple becomes pale faces best.'

But one at table had worn damaskin of pale green, woven with gold and silver arabesks—Lady Lucy, a debonaire maid, rosy-lipped and eyed like Venus—and I had sight for no other.

Mistress drew me to the bay, and pointed to the clearing beyond the pines where seven squares of light fell on the frosty grass.

'In your honour, O painter mine, a fire has burned there all week, and now five hundred candles are lighted! When we went before 'twas as down-trodden children. To-night let us sit and watch and listen to the bells.'

She laid her hand on my arm, and drawing over her shoulders the rich furs I had brought as a spousal gift, passed with me from the house. When we reached the temple steps, she ran forward and flung the valves open, so that, even ere we entered, we were bathed in the glow.

Inside much reparation had been done: the walls shone in white and gold, and the ceiling-fresco of 'Aurora pursuing Night' was newly cleaned and restored. The chamber was warm and sweet with burning logs. We closed the door and sat on the pigskin stools by the fire, the length of the hearth lying betwixt.

Drifting against the glass came the noise of Edale Bells. The lads were drunk as ever, lashing out the old tempestuous jangle.

'We are crowned,' she said. 'We have over fought side by side, and now we are victors.'

I looked at her, and saw that the frost had pinched her face and reddened her eyes. Then I gazed at Aurora, juicy and fresh. On the hearth lay a withered leaf that had tapped in after us: on the table a great yellow rose. And I was moved by these things to speak the truth.

'Aime, let it be all over between us. We have grown apart; life together would be miserable. . . . I have my art, and you would bind me to earth. From this night we will be cordial friends; lovers we have never been. . . . I cannot love you.'

After a while she turned her eyes from mine and bowed her head. 'Better so,' she murmured. 'I am not worthy.'

For an hour she sat in silence, flushing and twining her hands. . . .

CRYSTALLA'S LETTER TO THE *Spectator*.

Jan. 19, 1712.

Mr. Spectator,

As I have dwelt in these wilds since my birth, and, though an Earl's daughter, have never been permitted to show myself in London, a description of my face and figure must needs give you pleasure. 'Tis not my own, but that of Pictor, send to me from this Journal.

'Of a full, ripe beauty, such as none but Virgins of high birth possess. A face neither round nor oval, but something between, touched with the softness of an apricock's sunside. Eyes lapin-coloured; in sober moments half-bid behind velvet lashes, but when roused sparkling azure fire. Lips such as a god might pasture on. Shoulders pure and white and smoothly dimpled; and a waist of most admirable shape. A foot so arched that Philip, her pet sparrow, cowers 'neath the instep.'

Methinks, sir, if you but saw me, spite of your melancholy, you also would fall in love. Though I be modest, I protest that the picture is nowise over-coloured. The simple country folk are so enamoured of my person that the louts line the way to church, and swear when 'tis fine, 'Tis Crystalla's weather.'

That your humble servant may receive advice concerning the disposal of her person, she begs to lay her case before you. For two years she has

been courted by an aged nobleman, who offers her a position of highest rank, and such wealth as only pertains to princes. There are many stains on his character, but he is old and not like to live long.

And now Pictor himself comes forward and sighs at my feet. He is a man of great fame, and, moreover, one attached by old kindness to my family. He is strangely ugly, being livid-skinned and orange-tawny-haired; but, notwithstanding, it has never fallen to me to meet a man of so many attractions. Maybe his stealthiness charms me, for he is like a cat treading softly and creeping from all manner of places; and I vow I would rather wed him than the handsomest man made since Adam.

He hath had love passages with a poor relation of mine, whom my parents, in return for fancied services, made guardian of my sisters and myself. She is a rixen and a shrew, who fancies to keep us within bounds; but I'll have none of her! Pictor, coming from a foreign land, brought her many gifts, utterly forgetting your handmaid, but their meeting was the quaintest and coldest thing (on his side) that I have yet beheld.

When he saw me his humour changed, and he put himself forward to delight, and his witless creature wept for very joy. With time, however, I saw his distaste grow and grow, till I could scarce forbear twitting both.

Now I see her going quietly about her work, but sighing in odd corners as if her heart would break.

So, dear Mr. Spectator, I desire you to inform me whether, being an Earl's daughter, it would be great folly in me to choose the painter and flout the duke. The one holds me in chains of fascination; the other, though I don't hate him, wakens no tender feeling.

I am, Sir, your dutiful and obedient servant
and admirer,

CRYSTALLA.

P.S.—I entreat you let me know soon.

MY FRIEND



THEY have just told me that I cannot live beyond midnight. But this is no confession of guilt. Knowing that I was soon to see an unknown land, and that the friend I had won (the first and the last) loved me so dearly that he would be unhappy unless his hand were clasping mine—did I sin in my desire that he should go forth, and be waiting for me?

A fortnight ago I met him in the street. His head was hanging, his gait dejected, he was talking to himself. I stood watching him. As he approached, long before he really saw me, a change came over him: his figure grew erect, his face sharpened, his lips closed. He smiled strangely as our eyes met, and I felt exultant in the knowledge that such spontaneous gladness should never degenerate. I took his hand, and held it so long that the townsfolk looked and laughed.

'Gabriel,' I said, 'I have been dreaming of you again. I thought we had gone together to spend Sunday on the Ness of Blakelaw.' A warm flush of pleasure spread over his face. 'Yes,' I went on, 'and you said in my dream that it was the last of the vignettes' (he had a way of calling our short holidays 'vignettes'), 'and I replied that this was on a grander scale.' He laughed, though I am sure he did not understand. 'If only you would go,' he made answer, 'I feel that I should be so much better for the mountain air. I am out of tune with all the world but you. I can start soon—in two hours, if you will.' So we met later. I looked on his dark face, and my heart leaped out to him. I forgot the acrimony of living with those whose only feeling for me was one of relationship; forgot the Dead Sea apples of my past, and felt joyful beyond expression: often pressing my hand to my heart, where the toy I carried nestled in its scarlet sheath.

Something in his face told me that he was sad. 'You are not happy now?' I said. 'I am not,' he replied. 'I am envious of you. Your life is so free: you have no business affairs to drag you to earth. But I shall be happy soon; it is good to be with you.' As for myself, I never was happier. My spirits rose quickly; from the far recesses of my brain I brought the wildest thoughts to lay before him. Flashes of inspira-

tion that only showed in his presence (sparks of divine fire, perhaps) spun themselves into one glittering string for his sake.

We were to sleep at the Eagle, a hostelry whose prosperity began dwindling with the decline of coaching. It lies eighteen miles from our town, midway between the hamlets Ashtraw and Glosboon. Neither of us had been there before; but the guide-book was explicit. The weather was dull; but it took no hold on me. We left the precincts of the town and reached the great moorland with its hridle-path. When the dense smoke of the furnaces had given place to fresh, heather-scented air, I essayed a question.

'Are you still depressed?'

'No,' he cried, with his brown eyes full of mirth.

'Then you are perfectly happy?' said I. (It was always gratifying to be assured of this.)

'I cannot be otherwise when I have left the town with you,' he said.

And at this I took his arm, for it was always less painful to myself when I walked close to him. We began to talk of our dreams. Circumstances had bound him to a profession that chafed his very core; but Nature had given him aspirations, and miraged him a future as great (if as worthless) as my own.

How daring I grew! Farther and farther I had ventured down the heretical abyss. Gabriel's

face gleamed with amazement : he drank it all in greedily. Was it not curious that I, who knew how fast the end was nearing, should have dared to relax my hold upon those snatches of hope which are as straws to the drowning man ? After a time I turned the discussion—if you may call a monologue a discussion—to my favourite theme, which is death. I had grown so morbid that I could pile horror upon horror. I gloated on the orthodox eternity : I drew brave pictures of my childhood's Satan in his environment of fire and gloom. But after the sunset rain came down in torrents. In five minutes we were wet to the skin. My clothes were old, my shoes let water ; I had no umbrella, but walked under Gabriel's. Just before twilight the path left the heath, and descended abruptly to the grass-grown coach-road that runs along the side of the hill they call the Silver Patines. Evening fell. The rain hissed on the heather, and the wind, catching the few guarded thorns, drew from them a dull, somnolous cry. The river, somewhat in flood, rushed over jagged stones ; a few moorland sheep were sheltering under the rocks that lined his banks. Owls, so unfamiliar with man that they rattled their wings well-nigh in our faces, went whirring through the air. They started a train of abstract reasoning in me as to the doctrine of transmigration.

' Ah, Pythagoras's metempsychosis ! ' I said to myself. I am certain that my tongue was silent ;

yet Gabriel smiled. I was slightly hurt, and, drawing my arm away, walked to the other side of the road, refusing to shelter beneath the umbrella. Soon came the knowledge that his smile contained no touch of contempt, but was only a glad movement for that he knew himself in such sympathy with me as to apprehend my unvoiced fancy. I hastened to his side, and begged him to forgive. But the charm was broken for a time. My thoughts had withered, my words were grown unpregnant. So his happiness fled, there came a sequence of those drowsy moments when silence is loathsome, yet must be. We felt them keenly. My head grew hot with grief: I it was who had snapped the golden cord. We had not walked much farther before Gabriel stopped and leaned his cheek on the wet stones of the wall. 'I wish that I were dead,' he murmured. 'I am tired.'

'Then shall we go back?' I said. 'Perhaps it would be best. We are both wet through: the inn may be uncomfortable—the rooms damp.'

He turned and gave me his hand. 'Go back?' he gasped: 'go back? Why—I wish—that I might pass—all my life there!'

'With the shadows and the rain and the wind's howling,' I added laughingly, 'and no home, but inn after inn, strange bed after strange bed?'

'No home, and you with me!' he cried. 'Ah! I could forget everything if you were with me.'

By now we could see nothing afar from us. At intervals a sound as of heavy hoofs a-splash on the road warned us to go warily. Ever and anon we waded tiny gullies. Thrice blasts of warm air, from the silt in which we were going, fluttered about my cheek and my hands. I fancied, and said, that these were disembodied souls hustled by the storm. Gabriel could not feel them; and when I said that another and yet another had touched me, held out his hands without avail. The wind piped with a shriller sound, changing its tone to one that mystified me, for we had passed the region of trees. Long-drawn sighs came first, then chords of broken melody, then whisperings as it were in a foreign tongue. Why, we were scouring some Druid stones! Ten yards to the right they stood, in a perfect circle, stately and tall, their bases hid in ling.

Again a change in the wind's song: a thousand shrieks as though men were being tortured with sharp knives. I turned to Gabriel, and spoke; it seemed as if my voice leaped with the storm. 'Gabriel,' I cried. 'What is it?' His wan face came near to mine. 'I hear nothing,' he said. 'Come, let us hurry; it is getting late—they may not let us in.' And a change had come into his voice too; a troubled note, as if a dread had swept over him. 'You are not afraid?' I said lightly. He made no reply.

Suddenly, as I listened, the heavens were rent from end to end, and a flash of lightning leaped out: to laugh and dance and gambol on the hill-tops, and then skip hissing across the river.

A sacrificial hymn was beginning at the Circle—a naked and bleeding victim was bound to the altar—fire and water were there—the long-bearded priests shook their white robes—the sharp knife glittered—and my own stiletto waxed heavy, as it strove to draw me downwards. I lifted my hand: just to touch the smooth pearl handle! Again the skies opened, but with only a momentary gleam; one glance of the Almighty Eye. But it was not so swift as to prevent me from seeing the face of the Sacrifice. ‘They have taken him away,’ I faltered. ‘He was at my side an instant ago.’ Gabriel drew me away.

He was shivering. For the first time that night I thought of his health. ‘Let us run,’ I said. ‘Give me your hand.’ He lowered his umbrella (it was of small use now, for the wind had risen—*risen*!) and then, hand in hand like young children, we ran together. It was delightful; but we were tired. So our feet were soon stayed, and, standing at an abrupt turn of the valley, we were aware of a lonely light agleam in the darkness—the light of the first house we had remarked since our nightmare town. It disappeared ere we reached the threshold. A sign-

board flapped uneasily, and we found that our journey was done. It was a vision of gables, with dormers and oriel; immense beams here and there upheld a sodden thatch; the chimney stacks, huddled and incongruously set, gave forth no friendly smoke. With a mad desire to harangue, I ascended the perron-staircase, and grasping its scrolled balustrade, began :—‘ Friend Gabriel, who listenest with the night bats and the darkness—what is the soul ? ’ (Heedless of the pelting rain and Gabriel’s tender lungs; brute that I was !) ‘ Nay,’ I continued, ‘ rather what is the body ? That I can define : husks—bushes—a frippery of flesh ! ’ The light came again, this time at an upper window. I struck the door with my fist ; but nobody heeded.

A few nights before Gabriel and I had seen a strolling company play *Cymbeline* : so I began to mimic the stentorian voice of the Imogen. The keyhole, which was hard to find, was covered with a stiff and rusty scutcheon, which I had some difficulty in moving. At last, though, I could press my lips to the void, and ‘ What, ho, Pisanio ! ’ I cried. Gabriel was too tired to smile ; but footsteps came along the passage, and after a wearisome time the bolts were all undrawn, and the door opened as wide as the chain would run. A harsh and feeble voice came forth upon the night : ‘ What do you want ? ’

'Supper and a room,' I said. Another minute, and we stood in a yellow-washed hall, hung at even distances with dusty stage-heads. A few paintings of scriptural scenes, done in Guercino's style and framed in black, were fixed between queer oak carvings, the subjects taken from the superstitions of Holy Church, for in the first I saw Christ, crowned with a great golden aureole, descending a ladder into flames that coiled snake-like about the bottom rungs.

I showed it to Gabriel; but he scarce seemed to heed. His eyes and mind were fixed on the woman who stood looking at us, the candle held above her head. To tell the truth, I never saw a stranger creature. She wore a long gown of amber cloth, padded voluminously, but unbuttoned at the bosom and showing her brown, wrinkled throat. Her feet were shodden, and were covered with grey stockings. Her face was profoundly unhallowed. There were remains of marvellous beauty; unparallelled eyes, pure and light blue and unfathomably deep, under white, knotted, bushy brows. No other feature did I note, save loose, prehensile lips and rippling flaxen hair that fell, like a young girl's, in great locks over her shoulders. In truth, she had sinned monstrously; and in punishment thereof Nature had gifted the most alluring of her sweetest with a permanency of youth: so making her a frightful anomaly—a

terrifying Death-and-Life. She stood bowed ; her mouth twisting, her eyes falling with inquiry on me. Gabriel she scarce observed ; and I know not what in myself attracted her. I was excited, and could scarce repress my mirth. Yet, when I think of it, how oddly laughter would have rung along that mildewed passage ! How Sara in the painting of the Angel's Visit would have smiled a grimmer smile !

After a while, sighing heavily, she turned and led the way to a great room. Here she lighted two candles on the central table and, bidding us wait for a little, disappeared. We could hear her movements grow more and more distant. I sat on a tiny settee—(bah, how cold it was !)— whilst Gabriel wandered about, lifting the candle at times to the Italian landscapes painted on the panelling. 'The Colosseum !' he cried suddenly—'and not ruined, but in its full pride. See, I can't understand this !' He drew me towards the picture (poor Gabriel was always a lover of art),—I looked, and was amazed to see the building I had so often dreamed of glistening in the moonlight. But my gaze was not so deeply interested as his, and, leaving the picture, it fell upon the miniature of a young girl above the mantelpiece. A host of memories came, my eyes grew dim, my chin trembled. Surely—surely—the likeness was familiar ? Yet it could not be. The

woman with the web of flaxen hair, Lenore whom I had lost, but never loved, Lenore whom I had forgotten years ago. Lenore with a rose—a lust-flower—a flower of voluptu—warming the iciness of the breasts it glowed between! *Lenore! Lenore! Lenore!*

I could not show it to Gabriel. It was not Lenore. How should the portrait of the holy witch, who slept so peacefully, encounter me here of all places? Fie! An instant, and I had fallen to speculating as the jack-o'-lantern of my folly bode, when the hostess came back. She bore a pan of live coals and a bundle of fagots; these she threw on the hearth, so that a bright flame was soon leaping giddily up the chimney. 'Gentlemen,' she said, 'your chamber is making ready. Supper shall be laid anon.'

Gabriel and I went to the fireside now, and stood in the heat. He was silent but not unhappy: indeed the gleaming of his sunken eyes went far towards dispelling the passion awakened by the miniature. Again the woman entered, this time with a laden tray. She drew the table nearer the fire, and, having spread the cloth and arranged the quaint china, produced from a large press dishes of old-fashioned confections—rose-petals, chubarberries, and almond comfits. Also, there were birds dressed in a way that I had never seen before. We grew very hungry at the sight.

A sense of possession came over me : I was the host, Gabriel the guest. I assumed the boncours. 'Pray, make yourself comfortable !' I said, and we both laughed until the lamplight flattered. He could laugh best—with the most singleheartedness. Outside the wind cried like a beaten child, and the gusts in the corridors were as mournful as the last breaths of a dying man. As no rain beat upon the windows, I surmised that the weather was fair, and I drew one of the sombre curtains. But I could see nothing but blackness : so with a shudder and a joyful thanksgiving that we were indoors, I went back to the table.

The collation done, I rang for the dishes to be removed. When, after a long time, the woman came, her suspicious curiosity was gone, and she moved in spathy. As she left us for the last time, after placing two logs across the andirons, she courted foolishly. 'Gentlemen,' she said, 'the door of your chamber opens on the first landing. A fire is burning there : you will see the reflection when you wish to retire.'

Beside the hearth were two great leathern arm-chairs, shaped like sedans. Gabriel took one, I the other. They were padded deep, and exquisitely comfortable. I leaned back, gazing dreamily on my friend's face ; for I wanted his features burned into my brain. He enjoyed the examination, but soon distracted me by speech.

'It seems a hundred years since we left the town,' he said; 'we are in quite another world—in a realm full of romance——'

'Gabriel,' I interrupted, as if I had not heard his remark, 'will you tell me the perfect truth if I ask you something?'

'Yes,' he replied. 'I promise seriously.' I covered my forehead with my handkerchief. I was fain to hide my look. 'Then,' I said, 'it is this: *Do you really care for my friendship?*'

'My dear fellow,' he cried impetuously, 'why do you ask? I thought you knew before now. There is nobody else on earth for whom I care a thousandth part as much.'

'Have I been of any use to you?' I asked: unnecessarily, for I knew what his reply would be. He reiterated my words.

'Any use to me—any use to me? Why I had sunk into a dreadful slough before I knew you. It had been a sleep of years and years, and you helped me out of it all, and made me human again. You have brought me ideal happiness in our friendship.'

I was silent a moment, then I said tentatively: 'Suppose that I had to take a long journey—one with no chance of returning? What of your friendship then?'

His face grew very white. 'If you take such a journey,' he said, 'I go with you.'

A stillness followed, so profound that I was

afraid lest the beating of my heart should attain to him and stir his sympathy. The gleaming logs on the hearth were as quiet as if the lapping flames were magical; and a dull, subtle perfume spread from the wisps of azure smoke that came winnowing down the chimney. The mantel was wonderfully wrought—a masterpiece in carved oak. Lilith, the wife of Adam, stood to the left; the Queen of Sheba, her feet on Solomon's Mirror, to the right; on the transome, clustering and grotesque, were angels and fiends. It was in accordance with my imagination—wild and fantastic, and with no unity. I bent towards Gabriel to point it out, but seeing that, drowsy with the heat, he had let his head fall back to the cushion, and was already well-nigh asleep, I strangled my remark, and began counting his face once more. What a curious forehead! It was high: not narrow, but oddly misshapen, particularly above the eyes, where the great black brows, bristling on penthouses, gave a fiercely kind look. His nose was good, his moustache coarse and with bitten ends; his lips were full and unequal; his chin was square. Here was nothing fascinating, save the fact that it was the face of my only friend.

Soon, impatient that he should sleep when I was wide awake, I rose from my chair and began walking about the room. Not daring to look at the miniature again, I turned to the opposite wall. A cry of delight burst from me, for stand-

ing there was a satin-wood spinet with open lid. I read the label of Johannes Pohlman, and the date, 1781. I had cherished from my earliest childhood the desire of playing on such an instrument, and I drew out the needleworked stool, and ran my fingers lightly over the keys in an attempt to harmonise my thoughts. To my surprise the tone was neither discordant nor decayed, but echoed with a charming tinkling. In a minor, on a numbed undercurrent of bass, a melody like a thin gold wire began its incantation. I lost myself: I was the Spirit of the Music—not the fragile fool whose life should be required of him so soon! But the vein was soon exhausted, and I turned to Gabriel to find him awake and looking at me. ‘What are you playing?’ he said eagerly. ‘I was dreaming unpleasantly, and the sound brought me to myself. I never heard anything like it’ (he passed his hand over his forehead as if perplexed): ‘it reminds me of twilight vapours in June, wind-borne across a marshy pool to die among fox-gloves and wild aniseed on the farther shore.’

‘You are right,’ I replied. ‘It is a requiem.’

Looking at my watch, I saw that it was now midnight, so I took up a candle and, lighting it at the fire, suggested sleepily that we should go to bed. Gabriel rose, and ascended the staircase at my side. The fagots in the bedroom had burnt low: only a dim red gleam was mirrored on the panelling of the landing and on the glossy door

of a clock, above whose dial a curious arrangement showed the waxing and waning of the moon. Our chamber was large, and apparently was over the supper-room. No carpet covered the worm-eaten floor; but a few discoloured skin rags, irregularly shapes, lay about, chiefly round the cedar bedstead in the middle, whereon a volant angel, blowing a gilt bugle, looked from the top of every post. I threw logs on the hearth, and while Gabriel undressed I lay on a couch from one of the recesses in the wall. As I rested, hot tears ran down my cheeks.

Gabriel drew aside the bed-curtains. I sprang to his side and took his hands. 'Stay,' I said gently; 'you have not said your prayers.'

He laughed blithely. 'I never say them,' he replied. I did not relax my hold.

'For God's sake,' I muttered, 'say them to-night of all nights.'

His mirth died quickly: 'If you will sleep better with the knowledge, I will say them;' and he began to pray with a surprising beauty. I said *Amen* when all was done. In less than ten minutes he was fast asleep.

For me, I sat listening to the deathwatch sound in the region of my heart; the nearly silent drip-dropping of blood from the vessel, now well-nigh exhausted, whose emptiness means freedom. Its ticking alternated with the clock's, and each one

brought a separate vision to my fancy—visions that I had thought ripped from my heart years ago. Visions of Lenore! O damned miniature! But Gabriel's breathing soothed me. Once he murmured: 'Friend!'

The gleaming of the hangings startled me. Some dull metal was interwoven with the wool, so that, as the light rose and fell, figures sprang from the folds and leaped down chains, eyes gleamed and dimmed, arms were uplifted and struck. Soon, in my curiosity, I began to consider the chief subject, and was amazed to find it that scene in *Tamburlaine*, where Bajazeth and Zabina lie with their brains dashed out. It was wrought on the side nearest the fire, and on the other (which I saw by candle-light) was an uncouth picture of the tent of Heber the Kenite, with Joel in act to use the lethal hammer. Suicide and murder, each grimly figured—suicide and murder: here were strange subjects for a temple of rest! Yet Gabriel's dreams were happy. Often during my vigil I drew the curtains, and laid my hand tenderly on his forehead, and watched the lines of care fade out and away. As the night passed, he seemed to realise my presence: so, not wishing to break his rest, I was content to listen to the rise and fall of his breath.

The wind lulled before dawn. I looked from the window, and high above (for the opposite hill

walled out all but a narrow slit) was the sky, dark blue and nebulous. On the sill a thin-voiced bird chirped a few odd notes. Another light began contending with the gloom from the fire. A solemn grey took the place of the gloom outside—a grey that brightened and heightened.

. . . ‘Gabriel,’ I said aloud. ‘Let us see the sunrise together. Come, dress yourself! We will go to the crest of the Nazze.’

He sat up in bed yawning.

‘Nay,’ he answered. ‘I am too lazy to walk far before breakfast. It is not time to get up yet. I am sleepy.’

But, seeing me fully dressed, he sprang to the floor with a bound that made things shake, and, clamouring that he was no sluggard, began to put on his clothes.

The sun rose; a long ruddy haze trembled above the hill. All the stars faded, and the glitter began to creep down the side of the valley. Streamlets were leaping in the tiny cloughs, and spreading before they reached the melancholy river into brown and white mare’s tails. Only that one bird, with the same acid piping! When we descended, breakfast had just been laid. There was nobody to wait at table; but everything you needed was there. ’Twas a still stranger meal than that of the night before. The food was impregnated with a strong flavouring, as of cinna-

mon; the coffee smelled deliciously; but a dish of scarlet poppies, with hearts like fingers, effused a close and sleepy perfume. We ate in silence; and, having sat a while, I rang for the reckoning.

The woman came, as evil-looking as ever, still wearing the amber gown. Moreover, the interest she had in me was greatly heightened, for she stood a minute gazing open-mouthed at my face, and her words were mystical. 'I trust that you have slept well here,' she said dreamily, 'for he who sleeps here needs no more sleep on earth. But this is not your last visit!' Had she seen anything in my eyes? Was she a witch? I turned to Gabriel, my heart panting. Thank God, he had not heard! But when I had paid her she plucked my sleeve, and led me to a great mirror between the windows. There she pointed to the reflection of my face, which I had never seen so impassive before. I turned half-angrily away, aghast but not surprised at her familiarity (for I knew her now), and she cackled drily, with a sound that better suggested wickedness than the most insidious speech. Even Gabriel was startled, and walked quickly to the door. As we stood on the threshold, to which she followed to speed us with courtesying, I asked the nearest way to the village of Esperance, whose church, with its priest's chamber and its bells, I wished to see.

'It's fourteen miles from here, gentlemen,' she

said. 'Pass for a good step along the river; cross at the leppings, where the water lies broadest; and when you reach the hill-top eight miles of barren moorland lie before you. The path is a Roman road, swarded and wide. Turn at the pillar with the snake-rings. Go straight through the clough to the right, and there is Esperance, with the Featherbed Moss betwixt.'

She closed the door with a loud bang, and left us standing in amaze. The guide-book showed me that the village was at most some seven miles off, and that by a straight road. But the sound of drawing bolts prevented us from asking any more: so we started for the river-side. Suddenly Gabriel turned to look at the quaint cluster of buildings. A cry burst from his lips: 'By Jove, we've come to the wrong place! This is not the Eagle—just look at the sign!' We returned. It was a long swinging hatchment, a lozenge with proper supporters, whereon was painted an ungainly mythical creature, half dog and half bird. An inscription—*Ye Gabbleratch Inn*—in faded gilt letters gleamed below. But that was not all; for through a small mullioned window to the left the old woman was peering at us, and looking over her shoulder was the face of the handsomest man I have ever seen: youthful, white, and with auburn hair; but so sinister withal that his gaze seemed as petrifying as a cockatrice's.

We turned and fled, breathless almost, but with a fleetness I should not have believed attainable to one in my condition. For long we turned the foot of a crag, and to our common relief passed out of sight of the inn.

'The Devil and his Dam!' quoth Gabriel, half in earnest.

The river broadened until it filled the bottom of the valley, whose walls grew more and more precipitous. Moss-covered stones, that bore the marks of ancient carving, met the path soon; and, though in places they were somewhat under water, they were distinct enough to make crossing safe. They ended at the entrance to a gorge, along whose side a path, built of clamped flags, rose sharply to a level platform. When we reached the top there lay a prospect of utter barrenness: an immense plain with an horizon of jagged peaks; a few scant patches of heather relieving the sameness of the red earth; the Roman road, with its green, velvety turf, stretching, like a stagnant canal, from where we stood to the farthest crevice in the sky-line.

A queer memory awoke in me. 'Gabriel,' I said, 'do you know the secret of this earth?' He did not: so I told him of a place, something akin to this, where, in my own childhood, the body of a girl, murdered in the first year of Queen Anne, was discovered perfectly intact and supple. The tale

pleased him. 'This is just the place I should like to be hurried in,' he remarked. His words excited me. At that instant I could have done it—painfully. But I wished above all things to spare him pain.

Once I paused ; between myself and the sun a hawk was grappling with a smaller bird, whose feathers floated down like snow-flakes. My tongue formed the word 'metempsychosis' again, and Gabriel understood once more. A taint of sorrow came at the thought of our brief parting. And then I was possessed of an unutterable joy.

* * * *

At mid-day he lay sleeping beside me on the moor. With my own hands I made his bed : with my own hands smoothed the sheet. Evening had fallen, when, alone and pensive, I heard the sweet bells of Saint Anne of Esperance, and saw the dim valleys of Braithwaite and Camdell with their serpentine streams.

ROXANA RUNS LUNATICK



AMONGST the Maypoetry in thainety-first volume of the *British Review* is the following composition by Lady Penrhile, whose Roxana had shaken the town for a whole season.

‘Placed in the hand of the Satyr who guards the Puzzle-Pegs at N——, with a tress of hair for Hyperion.’

If so be that Hyperion visit thy stately lawn on the anniversary of our parting, O Satyr, wilt thou tell him that R—— hath often sigh’d for him there, and that, tho’ she has worn green Hellebore, such as he gave her a year ago—when he vow’d an early return—her hopes grow ever fainter and fainter. Say to him that she is bound in golden chains, but that her heart sings when she thinks of him—(ay, her heart is ever singing)—whisper that she loves him more as every moment passes. And when thou hast done all this, bid Pan trill from his pipes, whilst thou chauntst this ditty.

Five halting verses follow, wherein 'tis told that the lovers had parted, that Roxana had wedded an old man, that she felt incapable of expressing in words the vehemency of her passion. But dear, pleasing ghosts haunted her chambers day and night.

My lord's cut-off doxy sent the journal, with a venomous letter bidding him rub his forehead, for fear of the cuckoo. So he pondered in his book-room, his half-blinded eyes fixed upon the logs; and, after many struggles with his better nature, he devised a plot worthy of Satan himself.

For Roxana was a prize worth keeping. She was pale, exquisitely pale. One forgot her eyes, but remembered that somewhere in her face was seen the sudden starting of a timid woman's soul. . . . Hast ever watched the heart of a palm-catkin when a wanton hand has fired it? Lurking under the outer blackness are red and yellow intermixed. Such was the colour of her hair that fell from nape to heel. Hands that alone might have quenched lawless desires: of a subtle pink, like the ivory that comes from Africk.

Few women could have given such devotion as she gave my lord. By some stratagem, some wild persuasion in her moment of wavering, he had gained possession. Compassion weakens distaste, and he had posed long as one broken-hearted.

How daintily did she acknowledge his requirements, how sweet her service had become ! When he had decided concerning Hyperion, his punctilio was greater than ever : the house rang with shrill commands for madam's comfort, and he sat hour after hour listening to her tenderest songs. She was a lutanist too, and great in the Italian masters.

On Oak Day, when men and maids bore the garland through the park, a country fellow came to mistress and delivered her a note. My lord was not present, but she grew faint and chill, and had much ado to applaud the pageant. With unseemly haste she withdrew to her chamber and read there—

'Many days have passed ere I could summon courage. At twilight to-morrow we will meet ; I have discovered the place. What manner of love was mine erstwhile that thou wert false ?'

In her cabinet were many choice silks. She made a bag of the richest, and put the folded sheet inside, and spread ambergris upon it, then hung it between her breasts. That night as she slept her fingers relaxed, and my lord took thence the token, and read it, gnashing his teeth. He put it back : so that in the morning flush, when her hand sought the thing, it seemed untouched.

That day passed so wearily ! In her spouse's company she was gay and brilliant ; all her pale-

ness had disappeared, and a feverish red pulsed in her cheeks. And he was brimful of paradox and of jesting, but sometimes she trembled because of the fearsome coldness of his looks. Once, when she fawned upon him he put her away, not untenderly.

'Sweetheart,' he said towards sunset, 'an' if thou wert false!'

'Ay, me,' she faltered, for the repetition of Hyperion's words struck her with terror. 'False! false!'

It was growing dusk; he peered close to the clock-face. 'More than two months have passed since we came here,' he noted, breaking the ominous silence. 'And yet this place is strange to you. Let us visit the old house—see, here are the keys! Dearest, lean on my arm.'

They passed through the garden to the porch and so to the milkweed avenues of the pre-Elizabethan part where all the lumber was stored. My lord saw Roxana's bodice swell as if the threads would burst. Soon they reached a great hall lighted with green windows, whose dimness scarce revealed the many sacks of too long-garnered grain, where the mice ran in and out. There, near the foot of a staircase that led to the gallery, he left her, and she heard the clicking of a lock.

My lord went to an upper chamber whence he could see the outlet of the man. The belling of

his red-eyed dogs as they strutted in their leash tickled his ears: he laughed and rubbed his forehead. The moon rose, and he could hear Roxana clamouring in the hail. After a while he descended by another way, and took out his death-hounds, and went towards the trysting-place.

Roxana could not know what happened in the darkness. The agony of the man whose every vestige of clothes was torn away, and whose white flesh gaped bloodily, was hidden from her by the seven feet of masonry that parted them as he leaped madly into the courtyard. Nor could she hear his worn, querulous cry—such a cry as the parwit makes before dawn. Yet, withal, her hands began to drum in her lap.

When the darkness was intense my lord came back. He felt for Roxana in the place where he had left her. She was not there: an hour before she had climbed to the gallery. He groped painfully round the walls.

In one corner soft delicious things like nets of gossamer fell on his fingers. He stooped to the floor, and touched more of them. Above was a sound of tearing, but no panting nor indrawing of breath. Another web fluttered past his face; his lips began to quiver. It was Roxana's hair.

THE PAGEANT OF GHOSTS



LATE twilight in June. A wood-lark rippling in mid-air. Drowsy-scented ladies' bed-straw in a marsh that was once a garden. On the terrace wall, beside the cedar, a stone urn with a lambent flame.

The casement hung open, and the excess of beauty and perfume drugged me : so that, with a sigh, I sank back into a moth-eaten sedan that had borne four generations to Court. Dried dust of lavender and rue filtered through the brocade lining, and grew into a mist, wherethrough the bird's song waxed fainter and fainter. Indeed, I was just closing my eyes when the tuning of fifes and viols roused me with a start.

A shrill titter from the further end of the ball-room drew me from my seat. At the outer extremity of the oriel hung a curtain of Philimot velvet, lined inwardly with pale green silk : behind this I stole, and, parting the draperies from the wall,

gazed towards the musicians' gallery. Five men, dressed in styles that ranged from the trunk-hose and collared mantle of Elizabeth's day to the pantsuits and muslin cravats of the third George, were arranging yellow musc-shirts on the table. The youngest forced a harsh note from his viol, then struck another's bald pate, and set all a-languing. A grave silence followed. Then began just such a curious melody as the wind makes in a wood of half-blighted fir.

All the scenes were lighted of a sudden, and the martlets and serpents in the alt-relief above the panelling sprang into a weird life. Resting between the fire-dogs on the open hearth were three logs, one of pine, another of oak, and a third of sycamore. The grey flame licked them hungrily, and the sap hissed and bubbled. The carved work of the walls was distinct: Potiphar's wife wrapped her bed-gown about Joseph, Judith triumphed with the bloody head aloft, and in the centre Lot's daughters paddled with his withered jowls.

I felt but little wonder at the change from stillness to life. As the last of my race, treasurer of a vast hoard of traditions, why should I be disturbed by this return of the creatures of old? I dragged forth the creaking sedan, and sat waiting.

A rusty, half-unstrung zither that hung near

quivered and gave one faint note to the melody. Ere its vibration had ceased, Mistress Lenore entered through the arched doorway. Hour after hour had she plucked those wires that cried out in welcome.

Her fox-coloured tresses were wrought into a fantastic web; each separate hair twisted and coiled. A pink flush painted her cheeks, and her lustrous blue eyes were mirthful. She wore opals (unfortunate stones for such as love), and hanging from a black riband below her throat was the golden cross Prince Charles had sent her from Rome.

The legends of her character came in floods. Wantonly capricious at one moment, earnest and devout as a nun's at another, her expression changed a thousand times as I beheld. Now she was racking her soul with jealousy; now pleading—as she alone could plead—for pardon; now, when pardon was won, laughingly swearing that her repentance was only feigned. As she neared my heart beat furiously, and I cried '*Lenore! Lenore!*' My voice was low and broken (the music gave a loud hurst then), but she passed without a word, her ivory-like hands almost hidden beneath jewels and lace. The further door stood open, and she disappeared.

Nowell the Platonist followed; a haggard middle-aged man in a long cloak of sable-edged

black velvet. Forgetful of all save desire, he bore a scroll of parchment, whereon was written in great letters *To Parthenia*. This was the only outcome of his one passion. At the second window he paused, with a wry mouth, to gaze on that statue of Europa from whose arm he had hanged himself. Then his hands were uplifted to his head to force away the agony of despair; for hurrying towards him came the Mad Maid, who could not love him, being devoted to the memory of one wrecked at sea.

'Why art thou in anguish?' she said. 'See my joy; laugh with me, dance with me. He returns to-morrow—the boat's coming in. Ah, darling! ah, heart's delight!' And she held up her arms to a girandole whose candles fluttered; but her face grew long, and thin, and pale, and she rested on a settee and drew from her pocket a dusky lace veil, which, being unfolded, discovered a ring with a burning topaz and a heart of silver. She leaned forward, resting her brow in her hands, and talked to the toys in her lap as if they understood.

To the veil she said, 'No bride's joy-blushes shalt thou conceal!'

To the ring, 'Thou hast gift of him who died and left me!'

To the heart, 'O heart, thou hast endured! Thou art not broken!'

After a few tears she refolded all, and unbuttoning her bodice took from the bosom a miniature framed with pearls; but, as if afraid lest it should grow cold, she replaced it hurriedly, and seeing that Nowell beckoned towards her, glided on, sighing, and with downcast looks.

Then passed a cavalier in azure silk and snowy ruffled cravat and long-plumed cap of estate. He was whistling a song that threw all hacheloes into humorous ecstacy. Who he was I know not: unless the courtier who had fought a duel with my Lord Brandreth, and had died in the wood near St. Giles's Wall, pressing convulsively in his right hand a dainty glove of Spanish kid. A merry fellow, quoth the legend, who loved the world and all in it, but who was over fond of his own jest.

Fidessa, the singer, entered next. She had brought her little gilt harp, and her lips were parted to join harmonies of voice and instrument. Bright yellow hair plaited in bands that formed a filigree-bound coronet; eyes half-veiled, with sleepy lashes, hands fragile as sea-shells. It was the *Ferdì Prati*, Mr. Handel's celebrated song, that she adored most, and on the morrow she would sing it at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields Theatre. At least she purposed to sing it then and there. Fate, however, had otherwise ordained: the to-morrow would never come, and the sweetheart at

the upland grange might well write on her letters, 'Darkness hath overcome me.'

Thin and pale Margot, her wanness heightened by dishevelled black curls, came forward in her scarlet cloak. Silent reproach was in her every feature; her eyes were stern and long-suffering. The prophecy that bound up her life with that of her dying twin was rapidly approaching consummation. Another moment and the direst pain filled her; for a loud cry from an outer chamber told her he was dead.

As she disappeared in the gloom, Nabob Darrington, himself in life the lover of a ghost, paced slowly along. A beau of the last century, wearing a satin flowered waistcoat and a coat and breeches of plum-coloured kerseymere, between his finger and thumb he held the diamond which he had brought from the East as a spousal gift for the woman who, unknown to him, had died of waiting. He was anticipating the meeting with her, and his brown cheeks flushed blood-red at the sound of a light footstep. He turned, saw one with violet eyes and tragic forehead; and with one joyous murmur they enfolded each other and passed.

Althea approached; a massive creature gowned in white and gold. In one hand she held a tangle of sage-in-wine, in the other, as symbolical kings hold globes, a bejewelled misal. The contention

between the two lovers—the old, who had tyrannised until her life was of the saddest, and the new, who filled her with such wild happiness—was troubling her, and she was pondering as to which should gain the victory. She was just beginning to understand that to wait in passive indecision is to be torn with dragon's teeth.

Barbara, with eyes like moon-pierced amethysts, followed, singing Ben Jonson's *Robin Goodfellow* in a sweet quaver that was only just heard above the music. How strangely her looks changed—from maiden innocence to the awakening of love! from the height of passion to the abyss of despair!

But as she went the horizon was ripped from end to end, and a golden arrow leaped into the ball-room. Dawn had broken. The scent of the ladies' bed-straw was trebly strong; the tired wood-lark sank lower and lower.

The room was empty—the pageant passed and done.

THE END.

A LIST OF NEW BOOKS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS OF METHUEN AND COMPANY PUBLISHERS : LONDON 18 BURY STREET W.C.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FORTHCOMING BOOKS,	9
POETRY,	10
HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY,	11
GENERAL LITERATURE,	13
WORKS BY S. BARING GOULD,	15
FICTION,	17
NOVEL SERIES,	18
BOOKS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS,	20
LEADERS OF RELIGION,	22
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERIES,	22
SOCIAL QUESTIONS OF TO-DAY,	23

OCTOBER 1893

OCTOBER 1893.

MESSRS. METHUEN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gladstone. THE SPEECHES AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES OF THE RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P. With Notes. Edited by A. W. HUTTON, M.A. (Librarian of the Gladstone Library), and H. J. COMES, M.A. With Portraits. *8vo.* Vol. IX. 12s. 6d.

Messrs. Methuen beg to announce that they are about to issue, in two volumes 8vo., an authorized collection of Mr. Gladstone's Speeches, the work being undertaken with his sanction and under his superintendence. Notes and Introductions will be added.

In view of the interest in the Home Rule Question, it is proposed to issue Vols. IX. and X., which will include the speeches of the last seven or eight years, immediately, and then to proceed with the earlier volumes. Volume I. is already published.

Henley & Whitley. A BOOK OF ENGLISH PROSE. Collected by W. E. HENLEY and CHARLES WHITLEY. *Crown 8vo.*

Also small limited editions on Dutch and Japanese paper. *12s.* and *42s. net.*

A companion book to Mr. Henley's well-known *Lyric Poets*. It is believed that no such collection of splendid prose has ever been brought within the compass of one volume. Each piece, whether containing a character-sketch or not, is complete in itself. The book will be finely printed and bound.

Henley. ENGLISH LYRICS. Selected and Edited by W. E. HENLEY. In Two Editions:

A limited issue on hand-made paper. *Large crown 8vo.*

A small issue on finest large Japanese paper. *Demio 8vo.*

The announcement of this important collection of English Lyrics will excite wide interest. It will be finely printed by Messrs. Constable & Co., and issued at first in limited editions.

Dixon. ENGLISH POETRY FROM BLAKE TO BROWN-ING. By W. M. DIXON, M.A. *Crown 8vo.* 5s.

A Popular Account of the Poetry of the Century.

Prior. CAMBRIDGE SERMONS. Edited by C. H. PRIOR, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Pembroke College. *Crown 8vo.* 6s.

A volume of sermons preached before the University of Cambridge by various preachers, including the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop Whaites.

- Oscar Browning.** GUELPHS AND Ghibellines: A Short History of Medieval Italy, A.D. 1190-1299. By OSCAR BROWNING, Fellow and Tutor of King's College, Cambridge. *Crown 8vo.* 5s.
- O'Grady.** THE STORY OF IRELAND. By STANDISH O'GRADY, Author of 'Finn and His Companions.' *Small crown 8vo.*

A short sketch of Irish History, simply and picturesquely told, for young people.

- Scott.** THE MAGIC HOUSE AND OTHER VERSES. By DUNCAN C. SCOTT. *Extra Fmt 8vo, bound in buckram.* 5s.

- Lock.** THE LIFE OF JOHN KEELE. By WALTER LOCK, M.A. With Portrait from a painting by GEORGE RICHMOND, R.A. *Crown 8vo., buckram, 5s. Fifth Edition just ready.*

'A fine portrait of one of the most saintly characters of our age, and a valuable contribution to the history of that Oxford Movement.'—*Times*.

Classical Translations

- Irwin.** LUCIAN—Six Dialogues (Nigrinus, Icaro-Menippus, Cock, Ship, Parasite, Law of falsehood). Translated into English by S. T. IRWIN, M.A., Assistant Master at Clifton; late Scholar of Lincoln College, Oxford. *Crown 8vo.*

- Morhead.** SOPHOCLES—Electra and Ajax. Translated into English by E. D. A. MORHEAD, M.A., late Scholar of New College, Oxford; Assistant Master at Winchester. *Crown 8vo.*

Two new volumes of the 'Classical Translations' series.

Fiction

- Cornell.** BARABBAS: A DREAM OF THE WORLD'S TRAGEDY. By MARK CORNELL, Author of 'A Squance of Two Worlds,' 'Vendetta,' etc. 3 vols. *Crown 8vo.* 31s. 6d.

- Baring Gould.** CHEAP JACK ZITA. By S. BARING GOULD, Author of 'Metahab,' 'In the Roar of the Sea,' etc. 3 vols., *Crown 8vo.* 31s. 6d.

A Romance of the Ely Fox District in 1815.

- Fenn.** THE STAR GAZERS. By G. MANVILLE FENN, Author of 'El's Children,' etc. 3 vols. *Crown 8vo.* 31s. 6d.

- Esme Stuart.** A WOMAN OF FORTY. By ESMÉ STUART, Author of 'Mabel's Marriage,' 'Virginia's Husband,' etc. 2 vols. *Crown 8vo.* 31s.

Parker. THE TRANSLATION OF A SAVAGE. By
GILBERT PARKER, Author of 'Pence and His People,' 'Mrs.
Falconer,' etc. Crown 8vo. 5s.

A pleasant story with a pathetic and original motive, by an author whose rise in the estimation of the critics and the public has been rapid.

Gilchrist. THE STONE DRAGON. By MURRAY GILCHRIST.
Crown 8vo. Buckram, 6s.

A volume of stories of power as wild and original as its name; them a ready welcome.

Benson. DODO: A DETAIL OF THE DAY. By E. F.
BENSON. Crown 8vo. *Seventh Edition.* 2 vols. 22s.

A story of society by a gay writer, full of interest and pomp, which has already passed through six editions, and has attracted by its brilliant satirical interest. The best critics were cordial in their praise. The 'Guardian' speaks of *Dodo* as unusually clever and interesting; the 'Speaker' called it a *delightfully witty sketch of society*; the 'Opinion' said the dialogue was a *perfect feat of dexterity and paradox*; the 'Athenaeum' spoke of the author as a *master of witty conversational ability*; the 'Academy' praised his *amusing dialogue*; the 'World' said the book was *brilliantly written*; and half-a-dozen papers declared there was *not a dull page in the two volumes*.

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Baring Gould. THE ICELANDER'S SWORD. By S.
BARING GOULD, Author of 'Mehalah,' etc. With twenty-nine
Illustrations by J. MOYSE SMITH. Crown 8vo. 6s.

A stirring story of Iceland, written for boys by the author of 'In the Rear of the Sea.'

Cuthell. TWO LITTLE CHILDREN AND CHING. By
EDITH E. CUTHELL. Profusely Illustrated. Crown 8vo. Cloth,
gilt edges, 6s.

Another story, with a dog hero, by the author of the very popular 'Only a Guard-Room Dog.'

Blake. TODDLEREN'S HERO. By M. M. BLAKE, Author of
'The Siege of Norwich Castle.' With 36 Illustrations. Crown
8vo. 5s.

A story of military life for children.

NEW AND CHEAPER EDITIONS

Baring Gould. MRS. CURGENVEN OF CURGENVEN.
By S. BARING GOULD, Author of 'Mehalah,' 'Old Country Life,'
etc. Crown 8vo. *Third Edition.* 6s.

A powerful and characteristic story of Devon life by the author of 'Mehalah,' which in its 3 vols. form passed through two editions. The 'Graphic' speaks of it as a *model of vigorous language and powerful power*; the 'British Daily News' says *that the story of the narrative is splendid*; and the 'Speaker' mentions its *brilliant imaginative power*.

Parker. MRS. FALCHION. By GILBERT PARKER, Author of 'Flora and Her People.' *New Edition in one volume.* 6s.

Mr. Parker's second book has received a warm welcome. The '*Athenæum*' called it a *splendid study of character*; the '*Full Mail Gazette*' spoke of the writing as *but little belated anything that has been done by any writer of our time*; the '*Sa. James*' called it a *very striking and admirably novel*; and the '*Westminster Gazette*' applied to it the epithet of *distinguished*.

Norris. HIS GRACE. By W. E. NORRIS, Author of 'Mademoiselle de Mervan,' 'The Rogan,' etc. *Third and Cheaper Edition.* Crown 8vo. 6s.

An edition in one volume of a novel which in its two volume form quickly ran through two editions.

Pearce. JACO TRELOAR. By J. H. PEARCE, Author of 'Kathie Pestrath.' *New Edition.* Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

A tragic story of Cornish life by a writer of remarkable power, whose first novel has been highly praised by Mr. Gladstone.

The '*Spectator*' speaks of Mr. Pearce as a *writer of exceptional power*; the '*Daily Telegraph*' calls it *powerful and picturesque*; the '*Birmingham Post*' asserts that it is a *novel of high poetry*.

Fryer. TIME AND THE WOMAN. By RICHARD FRYER, Author of 'Miss Maxwell's Affection,' 'The Quiet Mrs. Fleming,' etc. *New and Cheaper Edition.* Crown 8vo. 6s.

'Mr. Fryer's work recalls the style of Octave Feuillet, by its clearness, conciseness, its literary reserve.'—*Illustration*.

'It is impossible to read the book without interest and admiration.'—*Scotsman*.

'He has, in fact, written a book of some distinction, and the more his readers have thought and observed for themselves the more are they likely to appreciate it.'—*Full Mail Gazette*.

'Quite peculiar fascination is exerted by this novel. The story is told with unusual cleverness. "Time and the Woman" has genuine literary distinction, and the rarity of this quality in the ordinary novel needs no expression.'—*Family Fair*.

Dickenson. A VICAR'S WIFE. By EVELYN DICKENSON. *Cheap Edition.* Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

Frowde. THE POISON OF ASPS. By R. ORTON FROWDE. *Cheap Edition.* Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERIES

NEW VOLUMES. Crown 8vo

A MANUAL OF ELECTRICAL SCIENCE. By GEORGE J. BURCK, M.A. With numerous illustrations. 3s.

A practical, popular, and full handbook.

THE CHEMISTRY OF FIRE. By M. M. PATTISON MUIR, M.A. Illustrated. 2s. 6d.

An exposition of the Elementary Principles of Chemistry.

A TEXT-BOOK OF AGRICULTURAL BOTANY. By M. C. POTTER, M.A., F.L.S. Illustrated. 3s. 6d.

THE VAULT OF HEAVEN. A Popular Introduction to Astronomy. By R. A. GARROD. With numerous Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d.

METEOROLOGY. The Elements of Weather and Climate. By H. N. DICKSON, F.R.S.E., F.R. Met. Soc. Illustrated. 2s. 6d.

SOCIAL QUESTIONS OF TO-DAY

NEW VOLUMES.

Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d.

WOMEN'S WORK. By LADY DILER, MISS BULLY, and MISS ABRAHAM.

TRUSTS, POOLS AND CORNERS. As affecting Commerce and Industry. By J. STEPHEN JERNS, M.R.I., F.R.S.

Educational Books

Davis. **TACITI GERMANIA.** Edited with Notes and Introduction. By R. F. DAVIS, M.A., Editor of the 'Agricola.' *Small crown 8vo.*

Stedman. **GREEK TESTAMENT SELECTIONS.** Edited by A. M. M. STEDMAN, M.A. *Third and Revised Edition.* *Fcap. 8vo.* 2s. 6d.

Stedman. **A SHORTER GREEK PRIMER OF ACCIDENCE AND SYNTAX.** By A. M. M. STEDMAN, M.A. *Crown 8vo.*

Stedman. **STEPS TO FRENCH.** By A. M. M. STEDMAN, M.A. 18mo.
An attempt to supply a very easy and very short book of French Lessons.

Stedman. **THE HELVETIAN WAR.** Edited with Notes and Vocabulary by A. M. M. STEDMAN, M.A. 18mo. 1s.

Methuen's Commercial Series

Crown 8vo. Cloth.

Gibbins. BRITISH COMMERCE AND COLONIES FROM ELIZABETH TO VICTORIA. By H. de B. GIBBINS, M.A., Author of 'The Industrial History of England,' etc., etc. 2s.

Bally. A MANUAL OF FRENCH COMMERCIAL CORRESPONDENCE. By S. E. BALLY, Modern Language Master at the Manchester Grammar School.

Lyde. COMMERCIAL GEOGRAPHY, with special reference to Trade Routes, New Markets, and Manufacturing Districts. By L. D. LYDE, M.A., of The Academy, Glasgow. 2s.

Simplified Classics

A series of Classical Readers, Edited for Lower Forms with Introductions, Notes, Maps, and Illustrations.

Herodotus. THE PERSIAN WARS. Edited by A. G. LIDDELL, M.A., Assistant Master at Nottingham High School.

Plautus. THE CAPTIVE. Edited by J. H. FREER, M.A., late Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.

Livy. THE KINGS OF ROME. Edited by A. M. M. STEPHAN, M.A.

Methuen's Novel Series

A Series of copyright Novels, by well-known Authors, bound in red buckram, at the price of three shillings and sixpence. The first volumes will be:—

3/6

1. JACQUETTA. By S. BARING GOULD, Author of 'Mehalah,' etc.
2. ARMINELL: A Social Romance. By S. BARING GOULD, Author of 'Mehalah,' etc.
3. MARGERY OF QUETHER. By S. BARING GOULD.
4. URITH. By S. BARING GOULD.
5. IN THE ROAR OF THE SEA. By S. BARING GOULD.

6. DERRICK VAUGHAN, NOVELIST. With Portrait of Author. By EDNA LYALL, Author of 'Dorothy,' etc.
 7. JACK'S FATHER. By W. E. NORRIS.
 8. MY DANISH SWEETHEART. By W. CLARK RUSSELL.

HALF-GROWN NOVELS.

A Series of Novels by popular Authors, tastefully bound in cloth.

2/6

1. THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN. By F. MARIEL ROBINSON.
2. DISENCHANTMENT. By F. MARIEL ROBINSON.
3. MR. BUTLER'S WARD. By MARIEL ROBINSON.
4. HOVENDEN, V.C. By F. MARIEL ROBINSON.
5. ELPS CHILDREN. By G. MANVILLE FENN.
6. A DOUBLE KNOT. By G. MANVILLE FENN.
7. DISARMED. By M. BETHAM EDWARDS.
8. A LOST ILLUSION. By LESLIE KEITH.
9. A MARRIAGE AT SEA. By W. CLARK RUSSELL.
10. IN TENT AND BUNGALOW. By the Author of 'Indian Idylls.'
11. MY STEWARDSHIP. By E. M'QUEEN GRAY.
12. A REVEREND GENTLEMAN. By J. M. COBBAN.
13. THE STORY OF CHRIS. By ROWLAND GREY.

Other Volumes will be announced in due course.

Books for Girls

A Series of Books by well-known Authors, bound uniformly.

- WALFORD. A PINCH OF EXPERIENCE. By L. B. WALFORD, Author of 'Ma. Smith.' With Illustrations by GORDON BROWN. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'The clever authoress starts clear of snappy-snappy, and invests her novel with a fresh and striking dress. There is terseness and vivacity of style, and the illustrations are excellent.'—*Daily Telegraph*.

MOLESWORTH. THE RED GRANGE. By Mrs. MOLESWORTH, Author of 'Carrots,' With Illustrations by GORDON BROWN. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'A volume in which girls will delight, and beautifully illustrated.'—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

Author of 'Mlle. Mori.' THE SECRET OF MADAME DE MONTE. By the Author of 'The Ardier du Log,' 'Mlle. Mori.' Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'An exquisite literary cameo.'—*World*.

PARR. DUMPS. By Mrs. PARR, Author of 'Adam and Eve,' 'Dorothy Fox,' etc. Illustrated by W. PARKINSON. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'One of the prettiest stories which even this clever writer has given the world for a long time.'—*World*.

MEADE. OUT OF THE FASHION. By L. T. MEADE, Author of 'A Girl of the People,' etc. With 6 Illustrations by W. PAGE. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'One of those charmingly-written social tales, which this writer knows so well how to write. It is delightful reading, and is well illustrated by W. Page.'—*Glasgow Herald*.

MEADE. A GIRL OF THE PEOPLE. By L. T. MEADE, Author of 'Scamp and I,' etc. Illustrated by R. BARBER. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'An excellent story. Third portrayal of character, and broad and wholesome lessons about life.'—*Spectator*.

'One of Mrs. Meade's most fascinating books.'—*Daily News*.

MEADE. HEPSY GIPSY. By L. T. MEADE. Illustrated by EVERARD HOPKINS. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d.

'Mrs. Meade has not often done better work than this.'—*Spectator*.

MEADE. THE HONOURABLE MISS: A Tale of a Country Town. By L. T. MEADE, Author of 'Scamp and I,' 'A Girl of the People,' etc. With Illustrations by EVERARD HOPKINS. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

ADAMS. MY LAND OF BEULAH. By Mrs. LEITH ADAMS. With a Frontispiece by GORDON BROWN. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

New and Recent Books

Poetry

Rudyard Kipling. BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS; And Other Verses. By RUDYARD KIPLING. *Sixth Edition. Crown 8vo. 6s.*

A Special Presentation Edition, bound in white buckram, with extra gilt ornament. 7s. 6d.

"Mr. Kipling's verse is strong, vivid, full of character . . . Undeniable genius rings in every line."—*Times*.

"The dispassionate judge of Cockayne is heartily justified before the world; for a man of genius has taken it in hand, and has shown, beyond all cavilling, that in its way it also is a medium for literature. You are grateful, and you say to yourself, half in envy and half in admiration: 'Here is a book; here, or one is a Bookman, is one of the books of the year.'"—*National Observer*.

"'Barack-Room Ballads' contains some of the best work that Mr. Kipling has ever done, which is saying a good deal. 'Fanny Weary,' 'Gunga Din,' and 'Tommy,' are, in our opinion, altogether superior to anything of the kind that English literature has hitherto produced."—*Athenaeum*.

"These ballads are so wonderful in their descriptive power as they are elegant in their domestic form. There are few ballads in the English language more stirring than 'The Ballad of East and West,' worthy to stand by the Danish ballads of Scott."—*Spectator*.

"The ballads teem with imagination, they pulsate with emotion. We read them with laughter and tears; the metres flash in our pulses, the homely-colored words gleam with life; and if this be not poetry, what is it?"—*Pail Mall Gazette*.

Healey. LYRA HEROICA: An Anthology selected from the best English Verse of the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th Centuries. By WILLIAM ERDMYD HEALEY, Author of 'A Book of Verse,' 'Views and Reviews,' etc. *Crown 8vo. Stamped gilt buckram, gilt top, edges uncol.* 6s.

Mr. Healey has brought to the task of selection an instinct alike for poetry and for literary which seems so on quite wonderfully, and even amazingly, right."—*Guardian*.

TOMSON. A SUMMER NIGHT, AND OTHER POEMS. By GRAHAM R. TOMSON. With Frontispiece by A. TOMSON. *Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.*

Also an edition on hand-made paper, limited to 50 copies. *Large crown 8vo. 80s. 6d. net.*

"Mrs. Tomson holds perhaps the very highest rank among poetsess of English birth. This selection will help her reputation."—*Black and White*.

THESE. BRAND. A DRAMA by HENRIK IBSEN. Translated by WILLIAM WILSON. Crown 8vo. 5s.

"The greatest world-poem of the nineteenth century next to 'Faust.' 'Brand' will have an abiding interest for Englishmen. It is in the same set with 'Agamemnon,' with 'Lear,' with the literature that we now confidently regard as high and holy."—*Daily Chronicle*.

'Q.' **GREEN BAYS: Verses and Parodies.** By "Q." Author of 'Dead Man's Rock' etc. *Second Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

"The verses display a rare and versatile gift of poetry, great command of metre, and a very pretty turn of humour."—*Times*.

'A. Q.' **VERSES TO ORDER.** By "A. Q." Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt top. 2s. 6d. net.

A small volume of verse by a writer whose initials are well known to Oxford men.

"A capital specimen of light academic poetry. These verses are very bright and engaging, easy and sufficiently witty."—*St. James's Gazette*.

HOSKEN. VERSES BY THE WAY. By J. D. HOSKEN.

Printed on laid paper, and bound in buckram, gilt top. 5s.

Also a small edition on large Dutch hand-made paper. *Prior* 12s. 6d. net.

A Volume of Lyrics and Sonnets by J. D. Hosken, the Poetman Poet, of Helston, Cornwall, whose interesting career is now more or less well known to the literary public. Q, the Author of 'The Splendid Spin,' etc., writes a skilful and biographical introduction.

Langbridge. A CRACKED FIDDLE. Being Selections from the Poems of FREDERIC LANGBRIDGE. With Portrait. Crown 8vo. 5s.

Langbridge. BALLADS OF THE BRAVE: Poems of Chivalry, Enterprise, Courage, and Constancy, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day. Edited, with Notes, by Rev. F. LANGBRIDGE. Crown 8vo. Buckram 3s. 6d. School Edition, 2s. 6d.

"A very happy conception happily carried out. These "Ballads of the Brave" are intended to suit the real tastes of boys, and will suit the taste of the great majority."—*Spectator*. "The book is full of splendid things."—*World*.

History and Biography

Collingwood. JOHN RUSKIN: His Life and Work. By W. G. COLLINGWOOD, M.A., late Scholar of University College, Oxford, Author of the 'Art Teaching of John Ruskin,' Editor of Mr. Ruskin's Poems. 2 vols. 8vo. 35s. *Second Edition.*

This important work is written by Mr. Collingwood, who has been for some years Mr. Ruskin's private secretary, and who has had unique advantages in obtaining

materials for this book from Mr. Ruskin himself and from his friends. It contains a large amount of new matter, and of letters which have never been published, and is, in fact, a full and authoritative biography of Mr. Ruskin. The book contains numerous portraits of Mr. Ruskin, including a coloured one from a water-colour portrait by himself, and also 12 sketches, never before published, by Mr. Ruskin and Mr. Arthur Severn. A bibliography is added.

'No more magnificent volumes have been published for a long time than "The Life and Work of John Ruskin." . . . — *Times*.

'This most lovingly written and most profoundly interesting book.'—*Daily News*.

'It is long since we have had a biography with such varied delights of substance and of form. Such a book is a pleasure for the day, and a joy for ever.'—*Daily Chronicle*.

'Mr. Ruskin could not well have been more fortunate in his biographer.'—*Globe*.

'A noble monument of a noble subject. One of the most beautiful books about one of the greatest lives of our century.'—*Edinburgh Herald*.

Gladstone. THE SPEECHES AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES OF THE RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P. With Notes and Introductions. Edited by A. W. HUTTON, M.A. (Librarian of the Gladstone Library), and H. J. COOPER, M.A. With Portraits. *8vo.* *Fol. X.* 121. 6s.

Russell. THE LIFE OF ADMIRAL LORD COLLINGWOOD. By W. CLARK RUSSELL, Author of 'The Wreck of the *Grasshopper*.' With Illustrations by F. BRANCFYRN. *8vo.* 15s.

'A really good book.'—*Saturday Review*.

'A most excellent and wholesome book, which we should like to see in the hands of every boy in the country.'—*St. James's Gazette*.

Clark. THE COLLEGES OF OXFORD; Their History and their Traditions. By Members of the University. Edited by A. CLARK, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Lincoln College. *8vo.* 121. 6s.

'Whether the reader approaches the book as a patriotic member of a college, as an antiquary, or as a student of the organic growth of college foundations, it will surely attract his attention.'—*Times*.

'A delightful book, learned and lively.'—*Academy*.

'A work which will certainly be appealed to for many years as the standard book on the Colleges of Oxford.'—*Advertiser*.

Hulton. RIXÆ OXONIENSES: An Account of the Battles of the Nations, The Struggle between Town and Gown, etc. By S. F. HULTON, M.A. *Crown 8vo.* 5s.

James. CURIOSITIES OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY PRIOR TO THE REFORMATION. By CHASER JAMES, Author of 'Curiosities of Law and Lawyers.' *Crown 8vo.* 7s. 6d.

PERRONE. THE HISTORY OF FLORENCE FROM THE TIME OF THE MEDICIS TO THE FALL OF THE REPUBLIC. By F. T. PERRONE. Translated by HANNAH LYSTER. In three volumes. Vol. I. 8vo. 12s. 6d.

This is a translation from the French of the best history of Florence in existence. The volume covers a period of profound interest—political and literary—and is written with great vitality.

"This is a standard book by an honest and intelligent historian, who has deserved well of his countrymen, and of all who are interested in Italian history."—*Manchester Guardian*.

KAUFMANN. CHARLES KINGSLEY. By M. KAUFMANN, M.A. Crown 8vo. 5s.

A biography of Kingsley, especially dealing with his achievements in social reform.

"The author has certainly given almost his work with conscientiousness and industry."—*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*.

OLIPHANT. THOMAS CHALMERS: A Biography. By Mrs. OLIPHANT. With Portrait. Crown 8vo. *Blackman*, 5s.

"A well-accepted biography, worthy of its author and of the remarkable man who is its subject. Mrs. Oliphant relates lucidly and dramatically the important part which Chalmers played in the memorable secession."—*Times*.

"Written with all the lucid literary grace that marks this indefatigable author's work, it presents a very complete picture of Chalmers as he lived and worked. . . . The salient points in his many-sided life are related with soaring judgment."—*North British Daily Mail*.

WALLS. THE TEACHING OF HISTORY IN SCHOOLS. A Lecture delivered at the University Extension Meeting in Oxford, Aug. 4th, 1892. By J. WALLS, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Wadham College, and Editor of "Oxford and Oxford Life." Crown 8vo. 6d.

POLLARD. THE JESUITS IN POLAND. By A. F. POLLARD, B.A. Oxford Prize Essays—The Lethian Prize Essay 1892. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.

CLIFFORD. THE DESCENT OF CHARLOTTE COMPTON (BARONESS FREEMAN DE CHARTLEY). By her Great-Granddaughter, ISABELLA G. C. CLIFFORD. *Swell* 4to. 10s. 6d. net.

General Literature

BOWDEN. THE IMITATION OF BUDDHA: Being Quotations from Buddhist Literature for each Day in the Year. Compiled by E. M. BOWDEN. With Preface by Sir Edwin Arnold. *Third Edition*, 1892. 2s. 6d.

Ditchfield. OUR ENGLISH VILLAGES: Their Story and their Antiquities. By T. H. DITCHFIELD, M.A., F.R.H.S., Rector of Berkhampstead, Herts. *Prof. Sec.* 2s. 6d. Illustrated.

'An extremely amusing and interesting little book, which should find a place in every parochial library.'—*Guardian*.

Ditchfield. OLD ENGLISH SPORTS. By P. H. DITCHFIELD, M.A. *Crown Sec.* 2s. 6d. Illustrated.

'A charming account of old English Sports.'—*Morning Post*.

Burns. PARSON AND PEASANT: Chapters of their Natural History. By J. K. BURNS, M.A., Rector of Walsing. *Crown Sec.* 5s.

'"Parson and Peasant" is a book not only to be interested in, but to learn something from—a book which may prove a help to many a clergyman, and broaden the heart and open the charity of laymen.'—*Sunday Mercury*.

Mason. A MONOGRAPH OF THE MYXOGASTRES. By GEORGE MASON. With 12 Coloured Plates. *Royal Sec.* 18s. net. This is the only work in English on this important group. It contains 12 Coloured Plates, produced in the finest style of chromo-lithography.

'Supplies a want sorely felt. Its merits are of a high order, and it is one of the most important contributions to systematic natural science which have lately appeared.'—*Westminster Review*.

'A work much in advance of any book in the language treating of this group of organisms. It is indispensable to every student of the Myxogastrea. The coloured plates deserve high praise for their accuracy and execution.'—*Nature*.

Conningham. THE PATH TOWARDS KNOWLEDGE: Essays on Questions of the Day. By W. CONNINGHAM, D.D., Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, Professor of Economics at King's College, London. *Crown Sec.* 4s. 6d.

Essays on Marriage and Population, Socialism, Money, Education, Professions, etc.

Bushill. PROFIT SHARING AND THE LABOUR QUESTION. By T. W. BUSHILL, a Profit Sharing Employer. With an Introduction by SEYMOUR TAYLOR, Author of 'Profit Sharing between Capital and Labour.' *Crown Sec.* 2s. 6d.

John Beaver. PRACTICAL FLY-FISHING, Founded on Nature, by JOHN BEAVER, late of the Thyrsk House, Coston. A New Edition, with a Memoir of the Author by W. G. COLLINGSWOOD, M.A., Author of 'The Life and Work of John Ruskin,' etc. Also additional Notes and a chapter on Char-Fishing, by A. and A. R. SEVERN. With a specially designed title-page. *Crown Sec.* 3s. 6d.

A little book on Fly-Fishing by an old friend of Mr. Ruskin. It has been out of print for some time, and being still much in request, is now issued with a Memoir of the Author by W. G. Collingswood.

Anderson Graham. NATURE IN BOOKS: Studies in Literary Biography. By T. ANDERSON GRAHAM. Crown 8vo. 6s.

The chapters are entitled: I. 'The Magic of the Fields' (Jeffrey). II. 'Art and Nature' (Tennyson). III. 'The Doctrine of Idleness' (Thomson). IV. 'The Romance of Life' (Scott). V. 'The Poetry of Toil' (Bunyan). VI. 'The Divinity of Nature' (Wardlaw).

Wells. OXFORD AND OXFORD LIFE. By Members of the University. Edited by J. WELLS, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Wadham College. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

This work supplies an account of life at Oxford—intellectual, social, and religious—a careful estimate of necessary expenses, a survey of recent changes, a statement of the present position of the University, and chapters on Women's Education, student study, and University Extension.

"We congratulate Mr. Wells on the production of a readable and intelligent account of Oxford as it is at the present time, written by persons who are, with hardly an exception, possessed of a close acquaintance with the system and life of the University."—*Athenæum*.

Driver. SERMONS ON SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT. By S. R. DRIVER, D.D., Canon of Christ Church, Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford. Crown 8vo. 6s.

"A welcome volume to the reader's library. 'Introduction.' No man can read these discourses without feeling that Dr. Driver is fully alive to the deeper teaching of the Old Testament."—*Guardian*.

Chrysos. FOUNDERS OF OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM: Biographical, Descriptive, and Critical Studies. By T. E. CHRYSOS, D.D., Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford. Large crown 8vo. 7s. 6d. [*Ready*].

This important book is a historical sketch of O.T. Criticism in the form of biographical studies from the days of Eichhorn to those of Driver and Robertson Smith. It is the only book of its kind in English.

"This volume is one of great interest and value. It displays all the author's well-known ability and learning, and its opportune publication has laid all students of theology, and specially of Bible criticism, under weighty obligation."—*Athenæum*.

"A very learned and instructive work."—*Times*.

WORKS BY

E. Baring Gould, Author of 'Mehalah,' etc.

OLD COUNTRY LIFE. With Sixty-seven Illustrations by W. PARKINSON, F. D. BEDFORD, and F. MASEY. Large Crown 8vo, cloth paper covers, top edge gilt, 10s. 6d. Fourth and Cheaper Edition. 6s.

"*"Old Country Life,"* as healthy wholesome reading, full of happy life and merriment, full of quaint stories vigorously told, will not be accepted by any book to be published throughout the year. Sound, hearty, and English to the core."—*Parade*.

HISTORIC ODDITIES AND STRANGE EVENTS. *Third Edition, Crown 8vo. 6s.*

'A collection of striking and entertaining chapters. The whole volume is delightful reading.'—*Times*.

FREAKS OF FANATICISM. *Third Edition, Crown 8vo. 6s.*

'Mr. Baring Gould has a keen eye for colour and effect, and the subjects he has chosen give ample scope to his descriptive and analytic faculties. A perfectly fascinating book.'—*Scottish Leader*.

SONGS OF THE WEST: Traditional Ballads and Songs of the West of England, with their Traditional Melodies. Collected by S. BARING GOULD, M.A., and H. FLEETWOOD SHEPPARD, M.A. Arranged for Voice and Piano. In 4 Parts (containing 25 Songs each), *Parts I., II., III., 3s. each. Part IV., 5s.* In one Vol., roan, 25s.

'A rich and varied collection of ballads, poems, games, and people songs.'—*Lancashire Express*.

YORKSHIRE ODDITIES AND STRANGE EVENTS. *Fourth Edition, Crown 8vo. 6s.*

STRANGE SURVIVALS AND SUPERSTITIONS. With Illustrations. By S. BARING GOULD. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

A book on such subjects as Foundations, Goblins, Holes, Galfews, Raising the Hat, Old Beliefs, etc. etc. It traces in a most interesting manner their origin and history.

'We have read Mr. Baring Gould's book from beginning to end. It is full of quiet and various information, and there is not a dull page in it.'—*Notes and Queries*.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE CAESARS: The Emperors of the Julian and Claudian Lines. With numerous Illustrations from Busts, Coins, Cameos, etc. By S. BARING GOULD, Author of 'Mehalah,' etc. *Second Edition, 2 vols. Royal 8vo. 30s.*

This book is the only one in English which deals with the personal history of the Caesars, and Mr. Baring Gould has treated a subject which, for picturesque detail and human interest, is not rivalled by any work of fiction. The volumes are exquisitely illustrated.

'A most splendid and fascinating book on a subject of undying interest. The great feature of the book is the use the author has made of the existing portraits of the Caesars, and the admirable critical mastery he has exhibited in dealing with this line of research. It is brilliantly written, and the illustrations are supplied on a scale of profuse magnificence.'—*Daily Chronicle*.

'The volumes will to no small disappoint the general reader. Indeed, in their way, there is nothing in any sense as good in English. . . . Mr. Baring Gould has presented his narrative in such a way as not to make one dull page.'—*Advertiser*.

ACQUETTA, and other Stories. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

ARMINELL: A Social Romance. New Edition. Crown 8vo.
3s. 6d.

'To say that a book is by the author of "Mahalah" is to imply that it contains a story told on strong lines, containing dramatic possibilities, vivid and sympathetic descriptions of Nature, and a wealth of ingenious imagery. All these expectations are justified by "Arminell."—*Spectator*.

URITH: A Story of Dartmoor. Third Edition. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'The author is at his best.'—*Times*.

'He has nearly reached the high water-mark of "Mahalah."—*National Observer*.

MARGERY OF QUETHER, and other Stories. Crown 8vo.
3s. 6d.

IN THE ROAR OF THE SEA: A Tale of the Cornish Coast.
New Edition. 3s. 6d.

MRS. CURGENVEN OF CURGENVEN. Third Edition. 6s.

Fiction

Fryce. TIME AND THE WOMAN. By RICHARD FRYCE,
Author of 'Miss Maxwell's Affections,' 'The Quiet Mrs. Fleming,'
etc. New and Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6s.

'Mr. Fryce's work recalls the style of Octave Feuillet, by its charm, tenderness, its literary reserve.'—*Athenæum*.

Gray. ELSA. A Novel. By E. McQUEEN GRAY. Crown 8vo. 6s.

'A charming novel. The characters are not only powerful sketches, but minutely and carefully finished portraits.'—*Guardian*

Anthony Hope. A CHANGE OF AIR: A Novel. By
ANTHONY HOPE, Author of 'Mr. Whit's Widow,' etc. 1 vol.
Crown 8vo. 6s.

A bright story by Mr. Hope, who has, the *Athenæum* says, 'a devoted outlook and individuality of his own.'

'A graceful, vivacious comedy, true to human nature. The characters are traced with a masterly hand.'—*Times*.

Edna Lyall. DERRICK VAUGHAN, NOVELIST. By
EDNA LYALL, Author of 'Dorovan.' Crown 8vo. 3rd Thousand.
3s. 6d. 1 paper, 1s.

Lynn Linton. THE TRUE HISTORY OF JOSHUA DAVID-
SON, Christian and Conquistador. By E. LYNN LINTON. Eleventh
Edition. Foul 8vo. 1s.

Dicker. A CAVALIER'S LADY. By CONSTANCE DICKER.
With Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

Author of 'Vera.' THE DANCE OF THE HOURS. By the Author of 'Vera,' 'Blue Roses,' etc. *Crown 8vo.* 6s.

'A musician's dream, poetically broken off at the hour of its realisation, is vividly represented in this book. . . . Well written and possessing many elements of interest. The music of "The Dance of the Hours" may be safely predicted.'—*Morning Post.*

Norris. A Deplorable Affair. By W. E. NORRIS, Author of 'His Green.' *Crown 8vo.* 3s. 6d.

'What with its interesting story, its graceful manner, and its perpetual good humour, the book is as enjoyable as any that has come from its author's pen.'—*Scotsman.*

Dickinson. A VICAR'S WIFE. By EVELYN DICKINSON. *Crown 8vo.* 3s. 6d.

Prowse. THE POISON OF ASPES. By R. ORTON PROWE. *Crown 8vo.* 3s. 6d.

Parker. PIERRE AND HIS PEOPLE. By GILBERT PARKER. *Crown 8vo. Buckram.* 6s.

'Stories happily conceived and fully executed. There is strength and genius in Mr. Parker's style.'—*Daily Telegraph.*

Marriott Watson. DIOGENES OF LONDON and other Sketches. By H. R. MARRIOTT WATSON, Author of 'The Web of the Spider.' *Crown 8vo. Buckram.* 6s.

'By all those who delight in the use of words, who rate the exercise of prose above the exercise of verse, who rejoice in all proofs of its dexterity and its strength, who believe that English prose is chief among the marks of thought, by whom Mr. Marriott Watson's book will be welcomed.'—*National Observer.*

Methuen's Novel Series

A series of copyright Novels, by well-known Authors, bound in red buckram, at the price of three shillings and sixpence. The first volumes (ready) are:—

3/6

1. JACQUETTA. By S. BARING GOULD, Author of 'Mehalah,' etc.
2. ARMINELL: A Social Romance. By S. BARING GOULD, Author of 'Mehalah,' etc.
3. MARGERY OF QUETHER. By S. BARING GOULD.
4. URITH. By S. BARING GOULD.

5. IN THE ROAR OF THE SEA. By S. BARING GOULD.
 6. DERRICK VAUGHAN, NOVELIST. With Portrait of Author. By EDNA LYALL, Author of 'Dorothy,' etc. Also paper, 1s.
 7. JACK'S FATHER. By W. E. NORRIS.
 8. MY DANISH SWEETHEART. By W. CLARK RUSSELL.
- Other Volumes will be announced in due course.

HALF-CROWN NOVELS

A Series of Novels by popular Authors, tastefully bound in cloth.

2/6

1. THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN. By F. MABEL ROBINSON.
2. DISENCHANTMENT. By F. MABEL ROBINSON.
3. MR. BUTLER'S WARD. By MABEL ROBINSON.
4. HOVENDEN, V.C. By F. MABEL ROBINSON.
5. ELPS CHILDREN. By G. MANVILLE FENN.
6. A DOUBLE KNOT. By G. MANVILLE FENN.
7. DISARMED. By M. BETHAM EDWARDS.
8. A LOST ILLUSION. By LESLIE KEITH.
9. A MARRIAGE AT SEA. By W. CLARK RUSSELL.
10. IN TENT AND BUNGALOW. By the Author of 'Indian Myths.'
11. MY STEWARDSHIP. By E. McQUEEN GRAY.
12. A REVEREND GENTLEMAN. By J. M. COBBAN.
13. THE STORY OF CHRIS. By ROLAND GREY.

Other volumes will be announced in due course.

NEW TWO-SHILLING EDITIONS

Crown Size, Ornamental Boards.

2/-

- ELPS CHILDREN. By G. MANVILLE FENN.
- DISENCHANTMENT. By F. MABEL ROBINSON.
- THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN. By F. MABEL ROBINSON.

Crown 8vo. Picture-Boards.

A REVEREND GENTLEMAN. By J. MACLAREN CORRIAN.

MR. BUTLER'S WARD. By MABEL ROBINSON.

JACK'S FATHER. By W. E. NORRIS.

THE QUIET MRS. FLEMING. By RICHARD PRYCE.

Books for Boys and Girls

Cuthell. ONLY A GUARD-ROOM DOG. By Mrs. CUTHELL.
With 26 Illustrations by W. PARKINSON. Square Crown 8vo. 6s.

'This is a charming story. Tangle was but a little mongrel Skye terrier, but he had a big heart in his little body, and played a lion's part more than once. The book can be warmly recommended.'—*Standard*.

Gollingwood. THE DOCTOR OF THE JULIET. By HARRY COLLINGWOOD, Author of 'The Pirate Island,' etc. Illustrated by GORDON BROWN. Crown 8vo. 4s.

'"The Doctor of the Juliet," well illustrated by Gordon Brown, is one of Harry Collingwood's best efforts.'—*Morning Post*.

Clark Russell. MASTER ROCKAFELLAR'S VOYAGE. By W. CLARK RUSSELL, Author of 'The Wreck of the Governor,' etc. Illustrated by GORDON BROWN. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'Mr. Clark Russell's story of "Master Rockafellar's Voyage" will be among the favorites of the Christmas books. There is a nautical "go" all through it, and its illustrations are charming in themselves, and very much above the average in the way in which they are produced.'—*Guardian*.

Manville Finn. SYD BELTON: Or, The Boy who would not go to Sea. By G. MANVILLE FINN, Author of 'In the King's Name,' etc. Illustrated by GORDON BROWN. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'Who among the young story-reading public will not rejoice at the sight of the old combination, so often proved admirable—a story by Manville Finn, illustrated by Gordon Brown? The story, too, is one of the good old sort, full of life and vigour, brightness and fun.'—*Journal of Education*.

Waldorf. A PINCH OF EXPERIENCE. By L. B. WALDORF, Author of 'Mr. Smith.' With Illustrations by GORDON BROWN. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'The clever author's story does of rascally-puckey, and leaves her moral with a dash and rolling down. There is vivacity and vivacity of style and the illustrations are admirable.'—*Anti-fascist*.

Molesworth. THE RED GRANGE. By Mrs. MOLESWORTH, Author of 'Carrots.' With Illustrations by GORDON BROWN. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'A volume in which girls will delight, and beautifully illustrated.'—*Full Malt Gazette*.

Author of 'Mlle. Mari.' THE SECRET OF MADAME DE MORTON. By the Author of 'The Atelier de Lys,' 'Mlle. Mari.' Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'An exquisite literary gem.'—*World*.

PARR. DUMPS. By Mrs. PARR, Author of 'Adam and Eve,' 'Dorothy Fox,' etc. Illustrated by W. PARKINSON. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'One of the prettiest stories which even this clever writer has given the world for a long time.'—*World*.

Meade. OUT OF THE FASHION. By L. T. MEADE, Author of 'A Girl of the People,' etc. With 6 Illustrations by W. PAGET. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'One of those charmingly-written social tales, which this writer knows so well how to write. It is delightful reading, and is well illustrated by W. Paget.'—*Glasgow Herald*.

Meade. A GIRL OF THE PEOPLE. By L. T. MEADE, Author of 'Scamp and I,' etc. Illustrated by R. BARNES. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'An excellent story. Vivid portraiture of character, and broad and wholesome lessons about life.'—*Spectator*.

'One of Mrs. Meade's most fascinating books.'—*Daily News*.

Meade. HEPSY GIPSY. By L. T. MEADE. Illustrated by EVERARD HOPKINS. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d.

'Mrs. Meade has not often done better work than this.'—*Spectator*.

Meade. THE HONOURABLE MISS: A Tale of a Country Town. By L. T. MEADE, Author of 'Scamp and I,' 'A Girl of the People,' etc. With Illustrations by EVERARD HOPKINS. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

Adams. MY LAND OF BEULAH. By Mrs. LEITH ADAMS. With a Frontispiece by GORDON BROWN. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

Leaders of Religion

Edited by H. C. BRUCHING, M.A. *With Portraits, crown 8vo. 2s. 6d.*

A series of short biographies of the most prominent leaders of religious life and thought.

2/6

The following are ready—

CARDINAL NEWMAN. By R. H. HUTTON.

'Few who read this book will fail to be struck by the wonderful insight it displays into the nature of the Cardinal's genius and the spirit of his life.'—*Western Mail*, in the *Tribune*.

'Full of knowledge, excellent in method, and intelligent in criticism. We regard it as wholly admirable.'—*Academy*.

JOHN WESLEY. By J. H. OVERTON, M.A.

'It is well done: the story is clearly told, proportion is duly observed, and there is no lack either of discrimination or of sympathy.'—*Manchester Guardian*.

BISHOP WILBERFORCE. By G. W. DANIEL, M.A.

CHARLES SIMEON. By H. C. G. MOULE, M.A.

Other volumes will be announced in due course.

University Extension Series

A series of books on historical, literary, and scientific subjects, suitable for extension students and home reading circles. Each volume is complete in itself, and the subjects are treated by competent writers in a broad and philosophic spirit.

Edited by J. E. SYMES, M.A.,

Principal of University College, Nottingham.

Crown 8vo. Price (with some exceptions) 2s. 6d.

The following volumes are ready:—

THE INDUSTRIAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND. By H. BE
R. GREEN, M.A., late Scholar of Wadham College, Oxon., Cobden
Fellowship, *Third Edition*. With Maps and Plans. 3s.

A compact and clear story of our industrial development. A study of this carefully
has countless book cannot fail to give the reader a clear insight into the principal
phenomena of our industrial history. The editor and publisher are to be congrat-
ulated on this first volume of their venture, and we shall look with expectant
interest for the succeeding volumes of the series.'—*University Extension Journal*.

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH POLITICAL ECONOMY. By
L. L. PRICE, M.A., Fellow of Oriel College, Oxon.

PROBLEMS OF POVERTY: An Inquiry into the Industrial
Conditions of the Poor. By J. A. HOBSON, M.A.

VICTORIAN POETS. By A. SHARP.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. By J. E. SYMES, M.A.

PSYCHOLOGY. By F. S. GRANGER, M.A., Lecturer in Philo-
sophy at University College, Nottingham.

THE EVOLUTION OF PLANT LIFE: Lower Forms. By
G. HANMER, Kew Gardens. With Illustrations.

AIR AND WATER. Professor V. B. LEWES, M.A. Illustrated.

THE CHEMISTRY OF LIFE AND HEALTH. By C. W.
KEMMINS, M.A. Camb. Illustrated.

THE MECHANICS OF DAILY LIFE. By V. P. SELLS, M.A.
Illustrated.

ENGLISH SOCIAL REFORMERS. II. DE B. GIBBINS, M.A.

ENGLISH TRADE AND FINANCE IN THE SEVEN-
TEENTH CENTURY. By W. A. S. HAWES, B.A.

Social Questions of To-day

Edited by H. DE B. GIBBINS, M.A.

Crown 8vo. 1s. 6d.

2/6

A series of volumes upon those topics of social, economic,
and industrial interest that are at the present moment fore-
most in the public mind. Each volume of the series is written by an
author who is an acknowledged authority upon the subject with which
he deals.

The following Volumes of the Series are ready:—

TRADE UNIONISM—NEW AND OLD. By G. HOWELL,
M.P., Author of 'The Conflicts of Capital and Labour.'

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT TO-DAY. By G. J.
HOLTOMER, Author of 'The History of Co-operation.'

MUTUAL THRIFT. By Rev. J. FROME WILKINSON, M.A.,
Author of 'The Friendly Society Movement.'

PROBLEMS OF POVERTY: An Inquiry into the Industrial
Conditions of the Poor. By J. A. HOBSON, M.A.

THE COMMERCE OF NATIONS. By C. F. BASTABLE,
M.A., Professor of Economics at Trinity College, Dublin.

THE ALIEN INVASION. By W. H. WILKINS, R.A., Secretary
to the Society for Preventing the Immigration of Destitute Aliens.

THE RURAL EXODUS. By P. ANDERSON GRAHAM.

LAND NATIONALIZATION. By HAROLD COX, R.A.

A SHORTER WORKING DAY. By H. DE B. GIBBINS
and R. A. HADFIELD, of the *Hecla Works*, Sheffield.

BACK TO THE LAND: An Inquiry into the Case for Rural
Depopulation. By H. E. MOORE.











UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 045854517